



Solar Ordinance Testimony
Sustainability and Planning Commission Study Session
12.14.16

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The science is in. Over 97% of the climate science community agrees that climate change is real and caused by burning fossil fuels. *I believe that science.*

We can see the impacts of climate change all around us. Deepening droughts and water shortages, massive wildfires, epic storms and flooding, heat waves and sea level rise. The last five years have been the hottest on record. 2015 was the hottest year with 2016 about to surpass this record.

In California alone, there are now over twice as many dead trees as people. Drought and increased temperatures resulting in insect infestation cause this unprecedented die off. This is just one face of climate change.

In April the American College of Physicians issued the following call to action: "Climate change will have devastating consequences for public and individual health unless aggressive, global action is taken now to curb greenhouse gas emissions."

It's time to take meaningful action to counter this threat.

The good news is that we can do something about it here in Palm Springs. We don't need to wait for Sacramento or Washington, DC. We can create common sense policies that will cut our greenhouse gas emissions and inspire other cities worldwide.

Our first priority must be to prevent new sources of GHG. As you know, the last GHG audit in 2010 identified that 70% of our GHG emissions in Palm Springs come from our buildings. Every time we add a new building, we add GHG to the environment and accelerate climate change. It's as simple as that.

So, we support an ordinance that will require installed solar on all new construction and major remodels. Similar policies have already been enacted in Santa Monica, San Francisco, Lancaster, Sebastopol, Culver City and San Mateo.

There are very real benefits to taking this first step to establish Palm Springs as a leader in sustainability. When we enact the proposed solar ordinance, we support our local solar businesses. We help create more local jobs for our citizens. We diversify our seasonal economy and we enhance our brand, attracting the next generation of tourist who care about sustainability. Most importantly, we create a viable future for our children and grandchildren.

When we pass the proposed solar ordinance, we also keep our promises to our residents. Our Sustainability Plan calls for cutting GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. That's just 4 years from now. We need to get started if we are to meet those goals.

Thank you to members of Planning and Sustainability Commissions for their impressive actions to move this ordinance forward.

Let's get it passed and get on with the good work of creating a thriving renewable energy economy and real energy independence.

We have no time to waste.

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