

FINAL DRAFT, 2/5/08



# LOCAL ACTION PLAN FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION

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PREPARED BY THE CITY OF ALAMEDA  
CLIMATE PROTECTION TASK FORCE AND THE  
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

As Part of the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign

Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_



City of Alameda Planning and Building Department  
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## Message from the Mayor

Dear Residents and Interested Community Members:

It is impossible to overstate the importance of global warming. No other issue threatens our planet with such far-reaching impacts, and no other issue is so clearly a worldwide problem. At the same time, many of the most promising solutions to global warming are local initiatives that we can control.

The City of Alameda has established a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 25% below 2005 levels by 2020. Achieving this goal will require action by government, businesses, and individuals. We know what causes global warming, and the steps to combat it are clear: reduce the use of fossil fuels. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions doesn't have to be difficult. In almost every case, it's good for the family budget and for the local economy.

We encourage you to join us in taking action on both a personal and a policy level. We will continue to examine local government activities to identify areas where we can reduce emissions from City operations. Please take an equally serious look at your own actions and search for ways to reduce emissions from your own activities. Every reduction matters, no matter how small.

Thank you for your interest in this vital issue.

Beverly J. Johnson  
Mayor  
City of Alameda

## Acknowledgements

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## Message from the Climate Protection Task Force

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

The City of Alameda is recognized nationally as having the lowest greenhouse gas emission rate per capita in Alameda County. Additionally, a large percentage of the energy utilized within the city is from carbon-free sources. Despite these significant achievements, there is still more that can be accomplished.

As members of the City of Alameda's Climate Protection Task Force, appointed by the Council to assist in the development of this Local Action Plan for Climate Protection, we recommend that the City Council pledge to further reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least an additional 25 percent by the year 2020.

In order to achieve this goal, we have developed a number of initiatives that are critical to the success of the Plan and the proposed reduction goal. We consider the following five initiatives to be the most critical of those listed in the Plan, and of the most immediate priority:

- 1. Adopt "Zero Waste Strategy" Programs and Ordinances.*
- 2. Develop a multi-faceted community outreach program to increase public awareness and participation in greenhouse gas reductions.*
- 3. Amend the Alameda Municipal Code to include sustainable design and green building standards for all new, substantially expanded, and remodeled buildings.*
- 4. Encourage the Alameda Public Utilities Board to require that Alameda Power & Telecom maintain and expand its source mix to 100 % carbon-free energy.*
- 5. Develop and fund alternative transportation strategies in the City's budget.*

It is absolutely critical that the City Council, its staff, local businesses, industries, institutions and the citizens of Alameda actively dedicate themselves to participating in and supporting these endeavors.

Sincerely,

City of Alameda's Climate Protection Task Force

## I. Executive Summary

### *Climate Change and the “Greenhouse Effect”*

The issue of climate change is frequently discussed on a national level and is a topic of worldwide news, school classrooms, and even casual conversation. The discussion of climate change is often framed by the phenomenon of what is commonly referred to as the “greenhouse effect,” which is the balance of naturally occurring gases that are dispersed in the atmosphere that determine the earth’s climate by trapping solar heat. The result of this effect is often referred to as global warming or global climate change. While some of the greenhouse effect is natural and necessary, because greenhouse gases play a vital role in maintaining the necessary conditions for life on earth, most scientists agree that human activities such as fuel consumption are disrupting the earth’s climate by intensifying the greenhouse effect.

The world’s population is releasing greenhouse gases faster than the earth’s natural systems can absorb them.<sup>1</sup> The release of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), creates a blanket around the earth that allows light to pass through but traps heat, preventing its escape into space and creating the greenhouse effect. These gases are released as by-products of fossil fuel combustion, waste disposal, energy use, physical changes to the land, and other human activities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities.

Locally, in Alameda and the surrounding San Francisco Bay Area, the forecasted changes in the climate could have the following impacts:

- Rising sea levels that threaten coastal infrastructure, ecosystems, and water supplies, including Alameda’s west side and its lagoon systems
- Warmer weather, resulting in longer dry spells and a decrease in Sierra snow pack that would affect fresh water availability
- Wetter weather, with an increase in annual rainfall of 20 to 30%, resulting in more serious storm events
- An increase in insect-borne diseases, such as West Nile virus, and other public health issues, such as increased rates of asthma and other pulmonary diseases

### *Local Actions Can Have a Significant Impact*

The good news is that the subject of climate change is receiving attention at many levels, including the local level, resulting in action by local leadership. It is important to note that despite their relatively small size, cities and counties have the ability to

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). *Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis*

