

HERE IS A SHORT TALK THAT WE HOPE YOU WILL BE INSPIRED TO GIVE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS, COLLEAGUES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS VERY SOON, AS TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

WHY YOU MIGHT GIVE IT IS EXPLAINED IN THE SPEECH ITSELF. YOU CAN DELIVER IT WORD-FOR-WORD OR CHANGE SOME THINGS—WHATEVER MAKES IT YOUR MOMENT TO GET OTHERS INVOLVED AND SHARING THE EFFORT. HOPEFULLY, OTHERS WILL FOLLOW SUIT.

HERE IT IS. GOOD LUCK TO US ALL!

By way of introduction you could say something like:

There's a 5 to 6 minute speech that is making the rounds in our county. It is non-partisan, concerns us all, and is being read by many people in the hopes of inspiring others to get involved. It deals with the current effort to update the General Plan of Mendocino County and to insure that two critically important considerations are reflected in every aspect of it: I'm speaking, of course, about diminishing petroleum resources and climate change.

The General Plan concerns much more than zoning and infrastructure and basic development.

Rising energy prices are impacting us all—in the fuel for our cars, in the prices of our food, and in our home energy bills.

At the same time, there is growing acceptance that CO₂ from fossil fuels is impacting the earth's climate. Climate Change forecasts predict more extreme shifts in weather, including increasing temperatures, stronger storms, decreasing water supplies and a disturbing northward migration of pests and diseases.

These interconnected issues must be considered during the current review of the County's General Plan. Fortunately, there is a team of concerned, knowledgeable, **local** citizens, from every area of the county, who have studied these relationships.

This team is called the Mendocino County Energy Working Group, or EWG for short. With more than 200 years of combined experience in renewable energy, the EWG was asked by our Supervisors to suggest policies that address the energy and emissions issues facing Mendocino County.

The EWG has gone one-step further: it has identified and prioritized policies that will keep the money we spend on energy, transportation, and food circulating in our own local economy. These policies will also reduce CO₂ emissions and foreign oil dependence while increasing our national security and the quality of the resources we depend on like the air, water and soil. Very impressive.

By law, our county must update our General Plan every 20 years. The last update was done in 1981, which makes the current update almost seven years late. Ironically, this gives us a chance to ensure that our next update incorporates—at every level—all the implications of diminishing oil and climate change, implications that are more certain and developed than they were seven years ago.

There are six groups of players in this action. First, of course, is the Board of Supervisors; it has given the initial updating tasks to the second group, an outside consulting firm that is working with the third group, the County Planning Department. The consultants and the Planning Department are charged with updating policies and taking public input. The fourth group is the County Planning Commission, which is made up of seven citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The County Planning Commission will review the work of the County Planning Department and the outside consultants. The fifth group is you, the People, the citizens of Mendocino County, who ultimately have the responsibility for letting your elected representatives know how you feel about the most critical issues facing us.

The sixth group— and least official—is the Energy Working Group, which is *ad hoc* and has no authority. The Report this Group has just published, if integrated into the General Plan, will allow Mendocino County to lead the nation in the use of local renewable energy resources. Indeed, it is at our county level that We the People can take responsibility for become self-reliant.

Consider how declining petroleum supplies, higher energy prices, and climate change can seriously affect a rural county like ours: almost all our

food is trucked in from outside the county, with only a few days supply on supermarket shelves at any time. Almost all of the energy we use for fuel and electricity is pumped or mined, then refined and generated somewhere else. Again, the implications of this must be reflected in the policies of our General Plan

The EWG's Report includes interdependent, interconnected planning and policy suggestions that work with each other and within the framework developed by the Planning Department and their outside consultants.

The Report also suggests ways to break the bureaucratic log-jam holding back appropriate development such as smaller parcel size variances to encourage Community Supported Agriculture and economic localization, or building code variances that encourage onsite renewable energy installations, or incentives for using high efficiency low emission vehicles.

The EWG recently conducted an energy and emissions inventory of the entire county and a review of existing county policies and those proposed by the outside consultant. What they found was that the county General Plan did not address fundamental energy and emissions issues. This is a glaring and dangerous omission. Indeed, California's Attorney General, Jerry Brown, recently sued San Bernardino County for NOT taking climate change into consideration as is now required by state law.

Just as California leads the nation in innovation, so Mendocino leads California in renewable energy and economic relocalization. In fact, Mendocino County is known for making the first retail sales of solar panels in the world back in the 70's and more recently started a nationwide relocalization movement to revitalize communities and plug the leaks that are bankrupting rural America. For our county to stay on the cutting edge, we need our General Plan to lead the way. You and I can and must actively insure this. The outside consultants may pick up on our timely needs but then again they may not. We don't want a General Plan that addresses seriously outdated 30 year old issues with "boiler-plate" measures.

What is the Board's reaction to the slow progress to get this far in the update process? We can't be sure, but it seems they want to speed up the process by cutting public participation. The EWG, however, has been working very hard to develop policies that will plug those leaks and address the shortcomings. If many of us pointedly ask the Supervisors to carefully

consider the EWG Report, either by signing the petition or appearing before them or writing letters mentioning the Report, there is a good chance they will listen.

The EWG Report is being published and distributed to the Supervisors, the Planning Commissioners, the Planning Department, as well as local state representatives. And, because Mendocino County continues to lead and inspire other counties, the Report is also being distributed throughout the country, to libraries, community organizations, and forward-thinking County Supervisors.

We are asking everyone to take a minute and think about the need to have effective policies that reflect the issues of declining petroleum, climate change and the need to become sustainable in our development. Won't you please consider finding a time and a place to give this little talk yourself? So, let me ask: Is there anyone here tonight who would be willing to give this little but important speech to some gathering or meeting or organization within the next week? *[Look around, acknowledge raised hands.]* Great, I have copies or can tell you where to get one.

A petition is also being made available requesting that the Board of Supervisors consider the Energy Working Group's policy proposals. Please sign it soon. When you can, get a copy of the 64-page Report *[hold up a copy of the Report]*, read it and discuss the issues with your friends and neighbors. If you can attend the supervisors meetings in person, please do and express your feelings. Finally, know what your supervisors are doing and, as participatory democracy requires of us, hold them accountable.

Thank you!

This talk was prepared under the guidance of the members of the Mendocino County Energy Working Group. For more information about the Group, call Brian Corzilius, Willits area, at 707-894-4634; Steve Heckeroth, Albion/Coast, at 707-937-3385; and Cliff Paulin, Ukiah area, at 707-228-9118. Town Hall Meeting/Panel Discussion sponsored by Willits Economic Localization, will take place on June 25 at Willits City Council Chambers, 6:30 PM. Thereafter, look to other 'bio-regions' of Mendo county for similar town hall meetings.