



News Release

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For Immediate Release

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County Commission Passes Progressive New Environmental Initiative Eco-County Initiative Committee Issues Detailed Report

The Clark County Commission took a step today toward reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by accepting a report with an expansive set of recommendations that focus on the following seven areas of conservation: air quality, water, water reduction and recycling, green building, energy use, transportation and land use/habitat protection.

The recommendations were detailed in a 50-page report produced by the Eco-County Initiative Committee, a working group created after the Commission passed the Eco-County Initiative on Dec. 4, 2007. The group was asked to study the environmental impact of county facilities, take inventory of current sustainability efforts, make recommendations to reduce energy purchases at the county by 20 percent by 2015 and achieve the 2050 climate stabilization goal of reducing global warming emissions to 80 percent below current levels.

Among the proposals the county will implement short-term are:

- Cutting down on document generation;
- Using double-sided printing;
- Reducing energy consumption by reducing power use within the county;
- Creating partnerships with local, state and federal entities to expand sustainability efforts; and
- Reaching out to citizens to promote conservation.

The county's participation with SNRPC falls in line with the outreach component called for in the Eco-County Initiative. The county will also look at partnering with the state and federal government to possibly consider statewide sustainability standards. The plan also includes a targeted plan to work with businesses and residents to further encourage conservation through incentive-based programs.

The "Eco-County Initiative," made at the request of Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani and Commission Chairman Rory Reid, is the broadest conservation effort proposed by the county to date. "Many of the recommendations require additional study to determine if they can be implemented in a fiscally prudent way given the current condition of the economy."

"I think this report is a reflection of our commitment to becoming a leader in conservation, but it also shows how much we are already doing to conserve Southern Nevada's natural resources," Commission Chairman Chris Giunchigliani said. "I'm happy we can start some of these proposals right away and look forward to expanding upon some of these ideas."

"This shows great progress toward our goal of sustainability," Commission Chair Rory Reid said. "I believe if we continue on this path, we will definitely become part of the solution to a large problem that affects us all."

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Clark County Board of Commissioners

Rory Reid, Chairman ■ Chip Maxfield, Vice-Chair ■ Susan Brager ■ Tom Collins ■ Chris Giunchigliani ■ Lawrence Weekly ■ Bruce L. Woodbury / Virginia Valentine, County Manager

The committee also proposed further study of long-term measures to reduce GHG emissions and utilize cleaner forms of energy by:

- Creating an office of sustainability;
- Expanding the use of gray water (non-industrial wastewater generated from domestic processes such as dish washing, laundry and bathing);
- Eventually installing solar panels on all covered parking lots;
- Exploring innovative ways to capture new sources of energy such as landfill methane gas;
- Using recycled materials for our roads and paved areas;
- Promoting telecommuting and teleconferencing; and
- Implementing greater use of alternative work schedules

The report also provides an inventory of measures the county has undertaken to conserve resources and reduce GHG emissions, such as:

Air Quality

- The county's Air Quality and Environmental Management department implemented a lawn mower swap program so residents can trade their gas-powered lawn mowers for electric models. Exchanging dirty combustion engine mowers with clean cordless mowers reduces particulate matter.
- The county implemented an aggressive dust control program to monitor air quality throughout the Las Vegas Valley, stepped up inspections and citations of construction sites that did not adhere to dust control measures and created a public outreach campaign to educate citizens about the need for dust control. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded the county certification for its success in reducing the amount of particulates in the air.
- The Department of Aviation is reducing air pollution by purchasing low volatile organic compounds like paints and using a fuel hydrant system for the aircraft which also reduces emissions during fueling.
- Beginning in 1993, the commission adopted an alternative fuel policy that has resulted in the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles for 90 percent of its small and medium-sized fleet.

Water Conservation

- In the area of water conservation, the Department of Parks and Recreation developed a conservation plan that included placing weather-sensitive water sensors in parks to save on water during rainy days. Nearly 1 million square feet of grass was removed and replaced with drought-resistant material. An additional 277,000 square feet of grass was replaced with synthetic turf. As a result, the parks department decreased its water usage by 92 million gallons since 2003. Once the water conservation plan is fully implemented, the parks department estimates it will save 250 million gallons a year at a savings of \$470,000.
- The Water Reclamation District is active in reusing reclaimed water (sewage treated for solids and impurities) whenever possible. It supplies five community golf courses with reclaimed water. Reclaimed water is also used on playing fields, as a coolant at a number of power generation stations and is made available to contractors for dust control too.

Land Use/Habitat Protection

- The Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning has made environmental standards part of the planning process to connect land use with transportation to create sustainable communities. The county has also implemented combined land use aimed toward reducing urban sprawl, which in turn will reduce the use of automobiles.
- Clark County administers conservation programs to benefit native species and promotes and maintains the Clark County Trails Program in urban and rural areas.

Waste Reduction/Recycling

- Recycling programs are currently in use throughout several county organizations. Those

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efforts include recycling of all paper, plastic and aluminum materials and recycling cell phones and discarded computers and monitors.

- The Department of Public Works runs a Pulverize and Pave Program that takes existing asphalt from older streets and grinds it up for reuse.
- In 2007, McCarran International Airport recycled more than 15,800 square feet of carpet, which was enough to cover a football field.

Transportation

- The Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning formulates transportation planning policies and guiding principals to encourage mass transit, proper placement of bicycle paths, pedestrian routes.
- Clark County's Department of Aviation has constructed on off-site car rental facility to reduce traffic congestion and emissions and provides satellite check-in facilities to further reduce traffic congestion.

Green Building

- The Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning encourages LEED-compliant designs at new sites.
- Real Property Management is in the process of adopting LEED standards for new building construction and existing structure retrofits.
- The Department of Aviation requires all new construction to be designed with day-lighting and xeriscaping.

Energy Use

- Spring Mountain Youth Camp utilizes solar power as a heating source.
- The Department of Public Works employs energy-saving LED traffic lights and high-pressure sodium street lights throughout the unincorporated county.
- The Department of Real Property Management has replaced traditional lighting with energy-saving lighting.

The working group's report also released results of a study that detailed GHG emissions from all Clark County government's assets. The study found that water and sewage contributed the greatest amount of GHG emissions (31 percent), followed by the county vehicle fleet (27 percent), buildings (21 percent), street lights (12 percent), employee commuting (7 percent) and solid waste (2.6 percent). The inventory of GHG emissions will create a baseline to compare to in order to meet the 2050 goal. The county is also working with other municipalities through the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC) to facilitate regional planning efforts that will widen the scope of GHG emission inventory and reduction.

Following the presentation of the report, the commission directed staff to create a working group to explore the fiscal impact of some of the recommendations.

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Clark County is a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to providing top-quality service with integrity, respect and accountability. With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation's 15th-largest county and provides extensive regional services to more than 2 million citizens and 44 million visitors a year. Included are the nation's 7th-busiest airport, air quality compliance, social services and the state's largest public hospital, University Medical Center. The county also provides municipal services that are traditionally provided by cities to almost 900,000 residents in the unincorporated area. Those include fire protection, roads and other public works, parks and recreation, and planning and development.