

From: [TomWhi](#)
To: [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [Breed, Mayor London \(MYR\)](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Subject: Comment on Proposed Amendment to Chapter 9 of Environment Code, currently in Transportation and Land Use Committee
Date: Monday, July 19, 2021 1:13:49 PM
Attachments: [Comment on Chapter 9 Revision by Tom Whitehead.pdf](#)

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Erica Major –

I am attaching a pdf with my brief comments on the Proposed Amendment to Chapter 9 of the SF Environment Code, currently in the Transportation and Land Use Committee. I hope this is an acceptable format for commenting.

Thanks.

Tom Whitehead

Re File no 210563: Further Strengthening needed of Environment-Code - Climate Action Plan

Dear Land Use and Transportation Committee and all Supervisors

I have reviewed a copy of the proposed revisions to Chapter 9 of the Environment Code, and although I wish I had more time to discuss it with colleagues, those who I have spoken with share a concern that while it represents many important advances, the urgency of taking major action to address climate change means that we must strive to achieve more challenging goals.

The language in Chapter 9 is aspirational. San Francisco has already gone farther than most cities to lead the way on climate action. We are fortunate to have been putting plans in place on many fronts to confront the challenges posed by a legacy of greenhouse gas emissions and human-caused warming. But it appears unlikely that we will avoid the catastrophic effects of global warming if we do not take more comprehensive action in a shorter time-frame than envisioned in the revised Chapter 9.

San Francisco occupies a mere 50 square miles of the Earth's surface, but it occupies a much larger footprint as a leader in confronting climate change. San Francisco also occupies an incredibly important position on the Earth's surface, in the diversity of species that share this space with humans, the diversity of environments we live in, the social and economic diversity of our people. You, our elected leaders, represent so many constituencies. You have a difficult job, and these are difficult times. You need to enlist the broadest support, both local and regional, and you need to set higher goals than you may think are achievable.

Our city's goal should be to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. Global warming is accelerating. More importantly, our citizens are increasingly aware of the effects that climate change will have, and is already having, on their lives. Now is the time to challenge the City, the region, and the nation, to accelerate our responses to climate change.

I feel confident that San Franciscan's will move forward vigorously to support implementation of the measures and strategies illuminated in the six overlapping basic categories of actions in the City's Climate Action Plan. But I am particularly concerned about one shortcoming of the proposed revisions to Chapter 9, which is why I am writing.

Throughout Chapter 9, but more specifically on page 8 of the redline copy of the Ordinance, at Sec. 902 (b)(6) Roots, the ordinance appears to limit the concept of the "Roots" component of the CAP to sequestering carbon. While this is certainly an important feature of Roots, I think it is important not to imply that this is the only, or even the most important feature. SFE has pursued a much broader concept, involving multiple benefits to the public, the economy, ecosystem health, biodiversity, equity, temperature mediation, increasing open space, etc., etc., that fills out the Roots concept and allows it to expand and adapt.

The proposed wording of Chapter 9 does not preclude this more expansive conceptual framework for the Roots component, but it worries me that if this limiting and slightly ambiguous language is embedded in the Code, it will give cover in the future to ignoring the much broader range of actions and benefits that are currently included in the Roods framework. This would be especially unfortunate if it results in insufficient funding and support for these broader measures. Furthermore, Roots is possibly the component that has the greatest opportunity for broad public participation, and probably at lowest cost. Simply revising the wording describing Roots to refer to its wider meaning, and making it clear that carbon sequestration is only one purpose of Roots, will help ensure that the Roots component continues to expand and attract ideas. Rather than the currently proposed language:

“ Roots. Sequestering carbon through ecosystem restoration, including increased urban tree canopy, green infrastructure, and compost application.”

Please consider more inclusive language, such as:

“ Roots. A broad range of strategies and techniques to protect biodiversity, increase open space and public access to open space, restore ecosystems, improve watershed function, increase the ability of natural systems to sequester carbon, reduce urban heat islands through tree plantings, and others.”

Thank you for continuing to lead in the effort to set appropriate and rigorous goals in the amendments to Chapter 9, and for providing funding and other tools to citizens and city agencies to implement these goals.

Thomas Whitehead
91 Melrose Ave
7th Supervisor District

From: [zahra_ghayour-kelly](#)
To: [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#); [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); dean.preston@sfgove.org; [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Breed, Mayor London \(MYR\)](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Re File no 210563: Further Strengthening needed of Environment-Code - Climate Action Plan
Date: Monday, July 19, 2021 1:08:30 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Land Use and Transportation Committee and all Supervisors,

Urban areas occupy less than 1 per cent of the Earth's land surface but house more than half of its people. Despite their steel and concrete, crowds and traffic, cities, like San Francisco are still ecosystems whose condition profoundly marks the quality of our lives. Functioning urban eco-systems help clean our air and water, cool urban heat islands, shield us from hazards and provide opportunities for rest and play. They can also host a surprising amount of biodiversity.

While we can not turn 500 years of history and 180 degrees overnight, very few times are we offered the possibility that can have an impact that can really change things, change the direction of history of our city. The Chapter 9 (Environment Code - Climate Action Plan) update you have in front of you is such an opportunity. Unfortunately, the Chapter 9 update you have in front of you is based on outdated science, and goals which follow the 2018 IPCC report recommendations for "average" global action, instead of positioning San Francisco as the leader that the San Francisco Climate Emergency declaration promises.

The goal of globally halving carbon emissions by 2030 and getting to net zero by 2050 now appears woefully inadequate to supporting human life as we know it on our planet.

Instead, our city's goal, especially as a leading City, should be to get our emissions down almost to zero by 2030 and to spearhead climate change adaptation efforts including promoting the establishment of vibrant green San Francisco, where biodiversity and populations can thrive. Protecting ecosystems and enhancing their ability to store carbon and their contribution to our well-being is so critical in light of climate change challenges.

Applications of Healthy ecosystems can work in every district in San Francisco. Far too little attention has been paid to the physical and mental health benefits that investment in healthy ecosystems can provide.

More specific comments on the current draft of Environment Code (section):

- Page 14- Please include SF Rec and Park as well as SF Port explicitly in the language as part of interagency coordination.
Our city's port manages our waterways and coastal ecosystems. Our city's Rec and

Park manages large amounts of land on behalf of San Francisco citizens. Not listing these agencies as part of the collaboration to develop the plan to address climate change is simply not practical and not acceptable.

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Under Amendments to current law:

The narrow definition of ways we as San Franciscans can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions with our given natural ecosystems under “Roots - (“ Roots. Sequestering carbon through ecosystem restoration, including increased urban tree canopy, green infrastructure, and compost application.”) is very limiting. Please use an inclusive language which also includes the many existing tools we have now to use. Please include increasing our city’s natural biodiversity on private and publicly managed land. We can sequester carbon, green our city and stop the loss of local biodiversity. It simply can happen through thoughtful and better land management.

Just to mention some of the tools available to us are: sidewalk gardens, backyard, front yards to plant native and drought tolerant gardens. We also have the opportunity and know how to restore creeks and coastal ecosystems (like Heron’s Head Park in the Bay View). Planting mini dense native forests, green roofs, green infrastructure, removing unnecessary concrete and replacing concrete with living and deep root indigenous urban green gardens and trees (school yards and some areas of slow streets have great potential for these actions). Promoting backyard composting and mandating on-site composting for city agencies with larger green organic waste are just some ready to go solutions that will fall under Roots. These tools are available now and the city can use these to address climate change and island heat effect while beautifying our city.

We need to reduce emissions now, with tools available now.

It is with high hope and great appreciation that we urge you to write the amendment of our city’s Chapter 9 by setting appropriate goals and providing tools to citizens and city agencies to implement. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Zahra Ghayour-Kelly

From: [Sara Greenwald](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [Breed, Mayor London \(MYR\)](#)
Cc: [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Re File 210563
Date: Sunday, July 18, 2021 5:14:49 PM
Attachments: [Re File 210563 San Francisco Climate Emergency Coalition.docx](#)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Re File 210563

Dear Supervisors and Mayor Breed,

We're pleased to hear of your decisions to update Chapter 9 of the City Code and to incorporate a focus on health and equity into the updated version. This change can put the city on the right track to address the climate -- and climate justice -- emergency, if its implementation follows immediately and comprehensively. As you know, this means that we must invest a significant amount of SF's city budget to make this vision for a livable future a reality.

However, even the new update is based on old science. Climate disasters are coming faster and harder than predicted even by the 2018 IPCC report. We are running out of time to make changes that preserve our access to clean water and our capacity to grow food. In essence, we are running out of time to make changes to sustain life as we know it. So the SF Climate Emergency Coalition urges the Committee to **set earlier deadlines for the goals in the new Chapter 9.**

We are glad to see a systems approach and an intentional cooperation between City Departments on the climate effort, with SFE in a central role. SFE's role is to be the one entity **responsible for and with the authority to coordinate and monitor effective climate action, and we appreciate that as a positive step.** However, we feel that the current writing falls short of providing SFE with the authority they need to actually implement and enforce (the word 'enforcement' is literally being stripped from Chapter 9) action across city departments. We cannot continue to hobble a department that works on saving our lives, and continues to punch well above its weight, by leaving it without adequate authority, mandate, and funding from the City.

The inclusion of considerations of equity and justice at every point in the planning and evaluation processes is commendable and key. Again, we urge careful adherence to the spirit of the text and a watchfulness that SF's actions do not cause unintended displacement of people, or inequities.

In furtherance of the above, we make these specific suggestions:

- The overall goal should be at least 90% GHG emissions reduction by 2030, so that as a wealthy city we can be ahead of the IPCC curve that requires GLOBAL AVERAGE

reductions of 50% by 2030, and due to the severe wealth disparities in the Bay Area, the document must specify that the reduction be achieved equitably.

- “Renewable energy” should be carefully defined not to allow "renewable diesel," "biodiesel," "renewable natural gas" and biogas (with the exception of locally produced and used biogas from SF's own waste treatment facilities, which is not produced for fuel but is an incidental product that is captured for efficient use) to be included in any components of SF climate solutions. These products have limited-if-any greenhouse gas reduction benefits and continue the particulate pollution harm being perpetrated on the lungs of San Franciscans, especially in low-income communities of color (near highly trafficked roads and freeways).
- We also recommend that collective action on building decarbonization and energy efficiency be supported, rather than individual action. From microgrids with district energy storage to increasing electricity supply to, and capacity and supply within, buildings on a whole street at once, there is time, money, and resource savings to be had by the collective approach.

Because of unprecedented hot weather, on July 6 2021 there was no snowpack left in the mountains that feed the Hetch Hetchy reservoir, which provides our drinking water. We are in the climate emergency now, and even among privileged San Franciscans, our ability to meet our basic life needs is becoming more precarious with every extra ton of greenhouse gas that goes into the atmosphere. Carbon capture and sequestration at a later date will not fix the life-threatening problems that emerge in the meantime.

We need to reduce emissions now, with tools available now. The future will only be livable if we bet on, and do all we can in, the present. We applaud the Department of Environment and others who are working hard to make climate mitigation and resilience work a reality. Now the City needs to prioritize this action as if our lives depended on it. Because they do.

Thank you,

San Francisco Climate Emergency Coalition
(Copy attached)



July 18, 2021

To: bos-supervisors@sfgov.org, MayorLondonBreed@sfgov.org
Cc: Erica.Major@sfgov.org, bos-legislative_aides@sfgov.org

Re File 210563

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Thank you,

San Francisco Climate Emergency Coalition

From: [Daniel Tahara](#)
To: [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Breed, Mayor London \(MYR\)](#)
Cc: [Major, Erica \(BOS\)](#); [Mandelman, Rafael \(BOS\)](#); [Bintliff, Jacob \(BOS\)](#); [Smeallie, Kyle \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Chapter 9 Updates (File 210563)
Date: Saturday, July 17, 2021 8:28:31 PM

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Dear Supervisors and Mayor,

I am writing as a resident of San Francisco writing to urge you to meet the demands of the current moment — a climate disaster — in your updates to Chapter 9.

While I applaud the 2035 commercial retrofits goal, the 2025 renewables goal (which should specifically exclude all fossil fuels such as “renewable diesel” and “renewable natural gas”), and the addition of a consumptions-based emissions goal, they are not in line with science.

I am not asking you to be bold. I am asking you to set our targets where the science demands. And to head off the semantic issues — science-based targets are *not* scientific targets. They’re politically negotiated, grounded in some reality, but not what literally the science demands.

We need to be net-zero or close to it by 2030 to give the rest of the developing world time to catch up. We are one of the wealthiest cities in the wealthiest countries in the world. 63% by 2030 isn’t our fair part, and our 2045-50 goals are effectively meaningless from the standpoint of having a livable future. The ravages of climate change are already here, and they continue to be worse than anticipated.

We need to have **truly centralized authority and enforcement of climate action** in SF Environment. Clarifying reporting and responsibilities around the edges is nice, but literally removing the word “enforcement” from SFE’s role is a step backwards. They continue to punch above their weight, but that’s not enough. We need to give them authority and money, and we need to do it now. You had an opportunity to fund SFE in the budget and you fell short. **Let’s get them the authority they need and dip into our emergency reserves (you did declare a climate *emergency* two years ago) and make climate action happen.**

I would also like to see a much more aggressive per-household consumption emissions goal. The targets are way out of line with the global average emissions we need to see in 2030 and beyond. Our consumption emissions are a measure of our material impact on the planet, and we have already induced more than our fair share. Please set **more aggressive consumption targets — 80% by 2030** — and also set a city-wide absolute goal rather than merely a per-household one.

Thank you,

Daniel Tahara

dktahara@gmail.com
(646) 397-6379

