Climate Policy at the Local Level: A Survey of California’s Communities

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Outline

- Scope for local government action
- Policies and programs
- Barriers to adoption
- Policy conclusions
Role of local government

- **Exclusive authority**
  - Land use planning
  - Optional: stricter building codes

- **Mixed local/regional authority**
  - Water and electricity
  - Transportation

- **State/federal influence**
  - Recycling
  - Energy efficiency/renewables
  - Transportation & land use (CEQA, SB 375)
Strong interest in climate issues

- Large majority working on mitigation
- Still much less focus on climate impacts
- Larger (& wealthier) communities more active
Climate action plans moving ahead

- Despite challenges on measuring emissions
- Often broader scope – “sustainability”
- Search for co-benefits
  - Open space
  - Walkability
  - Green jobs (Silicon Valley)
Local planning tools being updated

Share already done or planning to do

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More actions targeting facilities & operations than communities

- Waste reduction/recycling
- Transportation
- Energy efficiency
- Water use efficiency
- “Green” building
- “Climate-friendly” purchasing
- Renewable energy
- Land use
- Offsetting carbon emissions

% of respondents with policies and programs

Facilities & Operations  Community
Information gaps are a barrier

Only 36% of jurisdictions say information adequate for action
Resource constraints more acute

Only 11% of jurisdictions say resources adequate for action

- Funding for specific programs: 78% very helpful, 18% helpful, 0% not helpful
- Additional staff: 57% very helpful, 31% helpful, 18% not helpful
- Outside experts or consultants: 45% very helpful, 43% helpful, 0% not helpful
- Technical support from regional or state agencies: 49% very helpful, 38% helpful, 0% not helpful
Institutional/legal issues less acute

- Lack of clarity in the law (e.g., CEQA guidelines): 28% very serious, 38% not at all serious, 19% not too serious
- Conflicting state mandates: 22% very serious, 34% not at all serious, 19% not too serious
- Difficulties of coordinating with other agencies: 14% very serious, 37% not at all serious, 33% not too serious
- Federal or state preemption of local authority: 21% very serious, 27% not at all serious, 26% not too serious
- Lack of state-mandated actions: 12% very serious, 28% not at all serious, 30% not too serious

% of jurisdictions
Factors in success

- Partnerships
  - Utilities
  - Regional entities
  - Business organizations
  - Non-profits

- Creative financing
  - Fees & assessments
  - Support from partners
  - Grants & loans
  - Private investors
Barriers to address

- Address information gaps
  - Improve emission inventory methods
- Funding
  - Make information available
  - Consider new incentives
- Clarity in state law
  - Role of emissions in CEQA reviews
- Awareness on adaptation needs
Thank you!

- For more information: www.ppic.org