

Greenhouse Gas Environmental Impact Statements

PURPOSE

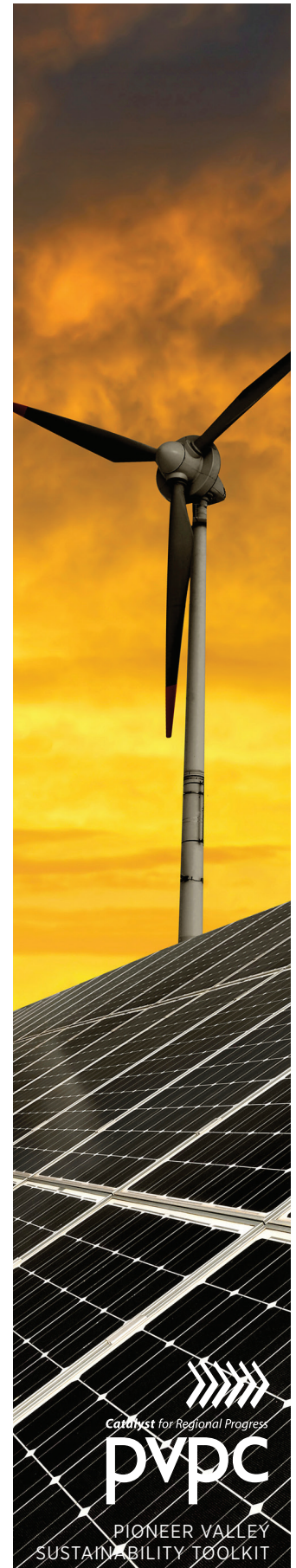
To require new, large-scale developments to identify and evaluate measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including traffic reduction strategies, carpooling and transit access as part of Site Plan Review process.

HOW IT WORKS

Communities can adopt zoning regulations to require applicants of large developments to calculate, model, or estimate the amount of CO₂ and other Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from a project, including the emissions associated with vehicular traffic, energy consumption, water usage and construction activities. Developers would present the findings to the Planning Board or other similar permit granting authority for review. The permit granting authority either accepts the estimates or makes recommendations for how to reduce the GHG emissions as a requirement for receiving a special permit or building permit.

EXAMPLES OF WHERE STRATEGY HAS BEEN ADOPTED

State regulation enacted through the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) requires large projects, such as those that are required to submit an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Environmental Notification Form (ENR) to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), to also include information on the projects' mobile- and stationary-source greenhouse gas emissions. This applies to emissions associated primarily with energy consumption, vehicle trip generation, and consumption of large quantities of water or wastewater generation. The regulation, known as the "Massachusetts GHG Emission Policy and Protocol" does not require quantification of other emissions categories, such as emissions associated with waste generation, materials consumption, conversion of biomass associated with land clearing, or construction period emissions.



Some Massachusetts communities already require some form of environmental reporting as part of the permitting process, and communities could require developers to submit the state GHG report for review by the local permitting authority. Communities could also require additional reporting requirements to cover land uses not addressed by state policy.

Further away from the region, San Francisco, California provides an example of where this concept has been implemented. The City has a policy to require the Planning Board to consider a development project’s “impact on the San Francisco greenhouse gas emissions limits” as part of the City’s review under California’s GHG emissions policy. The City must determine whether a given project’s climate change-related impacts are significant and recommend mitigation of significant effects.

LINKS TO MODEL BYLAWS OR MORE INFORMATION

» **San Francisco GHG Reduction Ordinance**

http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/MEA/GHG-Reduction_ApxB.pdf

» **California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. 2008. “CEQA AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Addressing Climate Change Through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review.” Technical Advisory:**

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_EPRP_Climate/OPR_Technical_Advisory_Publication%20Ready_June%2019%202008%5B1%5D.pdf .

- a. Interim guidance regarding the steps agencies should take to address climate change in CEQA documents.

» **Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency. 2009. “(Revised) MEPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy and Protocol.” PDF available at**

<http://www.env.state.ma.us/mepa/ghg.aspx> .

- b. Revised protocol for MEPA review’s requirement for GHG quantification; includes mitigation suggestions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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