

Climate Survey – Listen to your constituents!

Climate action is important. The only good thing about the current Climate Action item discussing the electrification survey is that it has allowed citizens a voice and the city government should listen.

The Electrification survey was right, electricity is expensive. Electric rates in California are easily twice the rates paid in the rest of the country. Sebastopol's citizens are pretty smart. They are also telling you that they are being stretched financially. The message should be that **the city need to try to control the costs the government incurs on behalf of our citizens.**

They also told you grid reliability is a significant barrier to adding more electric appliances. The conclusion of the climate action committee is all of us need more education. One would have hoped city employees would hear that **persistent power outages are a problem that needs to be solved.**

It is not only routine to shut off electricity during the hottest summer months if the wind blows, if it is not shut off, we get alerts to cut back on energy as the risk of a brown-out is high. **Even without storms, dry weather, power is off in parts of Sebastopol for several hours almost every month. Why?**

Whose job is it to work with state regulators and PG&E to get solutions to our power outage issues. **Who would be responsible for interacting with Caltrans to secure battery backup for the city's traffic lights to keep them functioning when the power does go out.** I found a request on the internet dating back to 2000 from Caltrans asking for intersections that needed to be prioritized for battery backup. I wonder if anyone from Sebastopol ever put in a formal request.

My suggestion is to **end the city's role in the Climate Action Committee.** The Committee could reform as a non-profit, recruit support from citizens and lobby for the changes necessary at the County, State, Federal and World levels. This would be more consistent with their stated purpose than can be achieved within the structure of a city government in the midst of a financial crisis.

Ending the city's role does not mean the committee cannot impact Sebastopol's policies. If the group were a citizen sponsored committee, they could petition the Council through public comment. They could provide expert citizen "advice" to the city regarding implementation of climate priorities. It is interesting that we have so many climate goals in our plan and only 1 hybrid Toyota in our fleet of autos and trucks! Perhaps Sebastopol Climate Action Group would have more impact from outside the city where they can put pressure on the city to "clean up its act".

If less city time and dollars were spent on things like Climate Action Committee and Public Arts Committee perhaps there would be more dollars to spend on hybrid vehicles that would help to lessen our city's impact on climate. I hear the mayor saying it is really not a lot of money. The problem is the city over time has adopted dozens of pet projects that don't cost much money. Focusing on the core responsibilities like public safety, clean water, dependable power, better roads, and parks would free up money for one or two more hybrid city vehicles.