

## Santa Cruz Pledges Energy Efficiency

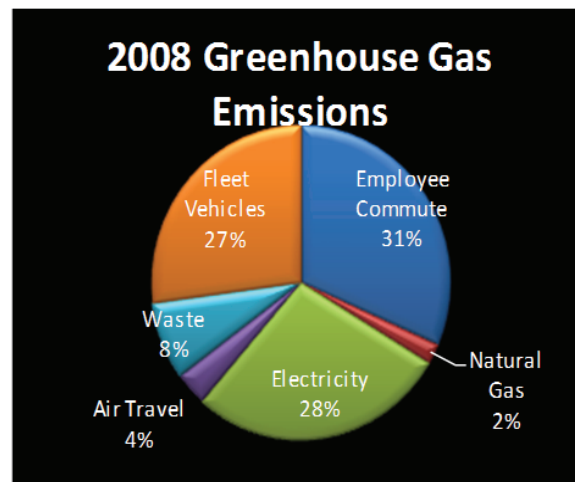
The coastal community of Santa Cruz, California has created a climate action plan that drastically reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through solar energy projects and green building renovations, along with numerous other conservation and energy efficiency strategies.

Santa Cruz has conducted multiple emission inventories to determine which sectors could achieve the greatest emissions reductions. Efforts were then prioritized by opportunities for saving, like building efficiency improvements, system upgrades, or a decrease in wasteful water and energy use.

Santa Cruz is “shedding a new light” on its carbon footprint by replacing nearly all incandescent traffic lights with high efficiency LED bulbs, reducing GHG emissions by 220 tons per year. A “Lights Off at Night” program was enacted in municipal buildings, reducing electricity use by 242,000 kWh annually and saving the city \$32,000.

The city has also taken an aggressive approach to reducing emissions in other areas of its operations. Santa Cruz opened an efficient water pumping and treatment center in 2002, reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while producing over 500,000 kWh of electricity to date. The city has also worked to replace older fleet vehicles with more fuel efficient vehicles. The municipal hybrid vehicle fleet alone has increased fuel efficiency by 50 percent compared to traditional gasoline vehicles. Combined municipal efforts have reduced harmful emissions by 16 percent, over half way to the 2020 GHG citywide reduction goal of 30 percent.

In addition to addressing municipal emissions, opportunities like the Santa Cruz Solar Hot Water Program offer residents, landlords, and small businesses interest free loans to install solar hot water systems. The systems save energy and over 30 years divert 50 tons of GHGs. Cost savings are evident too; residents can expect to save \$13-\$30 per month, and businesses even more. Repayment of the loans is usually \$67 per month, attached to a water bill, for five years.



*Santa Cruz has compiled multiple greenhouse gas emission reports to help track the reductions and improvements made. A significant change in emissions has taken place since the 1996 levels, due in part to solar energy promotion, sustainable purchasing, and energy efficiency measures.*

### Climate Action Successes:

- The city of Santa Cruz has completed both municipal and countywide greenhouse gas emissions inventories, as well as Climate Action Plans
- Santa Cruz County is a leader in the CaliforniaFIRST Renewable Energy Finance District Project
- City of Santa Cruz has reduced commercial GHG emissions by 21 percent from solar energy and energy appliance upgrades
- The city of Santa Cruz had reduced residential emissions by 22 percent over the last 25 years

### **What is Santa Cruz doing to promote sustainability?**

A 15 percent price preference has been offered for businesses who participate in sustainable purchasing for items like recycled-content paper, eco-friendly chemicals, and janitorial services. UC Santa Cruz also partakes in a sustainable food program, where 75 percent of goods bought meet sustainability standards set by the University of California Office of the President's Sustainability Team. Community projects like farmer's markets, community gardens, permaculture education and incentive programs, along with collaboration with various local and regional partners, have been sponsored by the Sustainability Team.

### **What is Santa Cruz doing to reduce energy use?**

Santa Cruz installed LED street lights in the business district, saving 253,000 kWh, enough to provide electricity to twenty homes for one year. A methane capture system has also been installed at the municipal landfill, diverting methane gas equivalent to the electricity emissions from 8,670 homes. Similarly, the wastewater treatment center has installed a water capture structure that reduces carbon emissions by 1,751 tons, the equivalent of carbon dioxide production from 6,541 vehicles per year. Also, over 400 homes have installed solar electric systems generating 1,840,000 kWh per year. In 2009, 139 systems were installed-- more than any other Northern California city.

Community education and awareness is a large part of Santa Cruz's success in the solar energy crusade. Individuals and businesses alike are committed to a healthy and sustainable city.

***“The Climate Action Plan is a strategy for Santa Cruz to grow in a sustainable way that meets GHG reduction goals while continuing... to keep Santa Cruz a vibrant and livable community.”***  
***Climate Action Coordinator,***  
***Ross Clark***



Photo credit: [www.news.ucsc.edu](http://www.news.ucsc.edu)

*UC Santa Cruz installed a PV solar system system that also tracks the sun in order to collect maximum light for solar energy.*



Photo credit: [www.greenbuildingnews.com](http://www.greenbuildingnews.com)

*The Live Oak Resource Center in Santa Cruz is the 10,000th building to receive a LEED certification, receiving a platinum level accreditation. Santa Cruz currently has ten other buildings that boast a similar accreditation.*

### **Contact Information:**

**City of Santa Cruz**

**Ross Clark**

**Climate Change Action Coordinator**

**[Rclark@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:Rclark@cityofsantacruz.com)**

**(831)420-5113**

**809 Center Street, Room 107**

**Santa Cruz, CA 95060**