

Resolution to Transition Away from Burning of Coal and Petroleum-coke in Santa Clara County

WHEREAS as devastating wildfires sweep across our state, fueled by climate-driven drought, extreme heat and high winds, the need for action on climate change has never been more urgent. To address this urgent issue, Santa Clara County has made a declaration of a climate emergency¹.

WHEREAS; Santa Clara County could greatly cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from stationary sources if coal and petroleum-coke burning industries transition by 2030 to technologies that do not emit greenhouse gases^{2,3,4,5}. Under State Law SB32, the state is required to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030⁶.

WHEREAS; the largest single source GHG polluter in Santa Clara County is Lehigh Southwest Cement Plant (Lehigh)⁵, which uses petroleum-coke as a fuel source to manufacture cement⁷, releasing nearly a million metric tons of GHG emissions per year based on its 2016 reported emissions⁸.

WHEREAS; as one example of a promising alternative to the current methods used by Lehigh, it should be noted that "Cementa, part of Heidelberg Cement Group [which Lehigh is also apart of this group], and Vattenfall have conducted a pilot study on electrified cement production aiming to produce cement with zero carbon emissions by 2030"⁹.

WHEREAS; as another example of a promising alternative to the current methods used by Lehigh, companies such as Blue Planet (Los Gatos, California) are developing and have piloted new technologies to capture the carbon dioxide in plants such as the Lehigh Cement Plant and produce commercially useful products¹⁰.

WHEREAS; we believe Lehigh and other companies operating in Santa Clara County should be required to minimize the adverse impact of their operations on our community and environment, and should provide good, union jobs, with pay, benefits, and working conditions that meet our local community's standards and expectations^{11,12,13}, and we believe the Lehigh can transition to cleaner fuels and to advanced production technologies while being held to uphold such standards.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that to lower GHG emissions and reduce toxic air pollutants the Santa Clara County Democratic Party calls upon the County and other government agencies to compel Lehigh and others to transition by 2030 from the burning of coal and petroleum-coke in Santa Clara County by converting to carbon-free energy sources and/or utilizing other technologies that do not emit greenhouse gases.

References – provided for background and not incorporated into the resolution text

1. The County of Santa Clara California Resolution BOS-2019-111 Accepted as Amended, [Aug 27, 2019 9:30 AM](#) “Adopt Resolution declaring a climate emergency that demands immediate action to halt, reverse, restore and address the consequences and causes of global warming”. (Cortese)
http://sccgov.igam2.com/Citizens/Detail_LegiFile.aspx?Frame=SplitView&MeetingID=11135&MediaPosition=&ID=98193&CssClass=
2. “Why California Should Say ‘No’ to Petroleum Coke.” Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter.https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u1054/0696%20California%20PetCoke%20Fact_02_x1a.pdf
3. “Why the Bay Area Should Say No to Coal and Petcoke Exports.” Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter.<https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/san-francisco-bay/Bay%20Area%20Coal%20Fact%20Sheet%282%29.pdf>
4. “The Gas Rush Locking America into Another Fossil Fuel for Decades.” Sierra Club National. “According to a study published by the National Academy of Sciences, methane leakage can as much as double the climate effect of gas” page 1, https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/content.sierraclub.org.naturalgas/files/1466-Gas-Rush-Report_04_web.pdf
5. “Bay Area Emissions Inventory Summary Report: Greenhouse Gases, Base Year 2011”, Table S: Annual GHG Emissions: SANTA CLARA Year 2011 (Metric Tons / Year) page 37
https://www.baaqmd.gov/~/media/Files/Planning%20and%20Research/Emission%20Inventory/BY2011_GHGSummary.ashx?la=en&la=en
6. Gonzales, Richard. “California Gov. Jerry Brown Signs New Climate Change Laws.” *NPR*, NPR, 9 Sept. 2016, www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/08/493191842/california-gov-jerry-brown-signs-new-climate-change-laws.
7. “Answers to Unanswered Questions from 2/28/19 Lehigh Public Meeting .” County of Santa Clara, 2019, page 4 “Although Lehigh is permitted to use coal as fuel, Lehigh uses 100% petroleum coke”.
https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpd/DocsForms/Documents/Lehigh_20190228_CommunityMeeting_Questions.pdf
8. California’s Cement Industry Failing the Climate Challenge: As a reference for ~1 million metric tons/year or 1,017 kilo tons/ figure for the Lehigh Cement Plant in Silicon Valley, please see page 19 and table 1 on page 20
[https://www.siliconvalleydemclub.org/resources/Documents/CA-Cement-benchmarking-report-Rev-Final\(1\).pdf](https://www.siliconvalleydemclub.org/resources/Documents/CA-Cement-benchmarking-report-Rev-Final(1).pdf)
9. “CemZero - A Collaborative Project with Cementa.” *Vattenfall*, group.<https://group.vattenfall.com/what-we-do/roadmap-to-fossil-freedom/industry-decarbonisation/cementa>
10. Kim, Jed. “Changing Carbon from Waste into Gold.” *Marketplace*, 29 Apr. 2019, www.marketplace.org/2017/02/23/changing-carbon-waste-gold/.
11. “The Gas Rush Locking America into Another Fossil Fuel for Decades.” Sierra Club National, page 7, “According to research Sierra Club commissioned from the University of California, Berkeley Don Vial Center on Employment in the Green Economy, the Sierra Club goal to replace all fossil fuel-based electricity with renewable sources of energy would create 4.3 million direct job years in construction and related services and could indirectly create more than 5 million job years through the construction supply chain by 2030.”
https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/content.sierraclub.org.naturalgas/files/1466-Gas-Rush-Report_04_web.pdf
12. “Health Effects of Petroleum Coke.” *EPA*, Environmental Protection Agency, 27 Jan. 2020, “...Significant quantities of fugitive dust from pet coke storage and handling operations present a health risk. EPA is particularly concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller (referred to as PM10) because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects...”
www.epa.gov/petroleum-coke-chicago/health-effects-petroleum-coke.
13. California’s Cement Industry Failing the Climate Challenge: page 28, “Several major decarbonization levers that can help California to reduce energy use and GHG emissions from its cement industry ...Different policy tools can help accelerate a transition and create incentives to clean up cement not just in California, but in other states and regions that supply the California market.”
[https://www.siliconvalleydemclub.org/resources/Documents/CA-Cement-benchmarking-report-Rev-Final\(1\).pdf](https://www.siliconvalleydemclub.org/resources/Documents/CA-Cement-benchmarking-report-Rev-Final(1).pdf)