

June 29, 2020

To: Aaron Hecock, Senior Planner
Geoff Ellsworth, Mayor
Mark Prestwich, City Manager
Maya De Rosa, P&B Director
St. Helena City Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners

Re: Farmstead at Long Meadow Ranch Restaurant and Lodging Project

Dear Mr. Hecock,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the project. While the applicant's sustainable farming ethic is thoughtfully practiced and graciously shared with the community, it's always difficult to see more valley floor lost to an expanding tourism industry. Recently, the climate crisis and now the pandemic have given us opportunity to pause. Is it a coincidence that in St. Helena this week a phase one water emergency was declared, and in the mountains above town a red flag warning went into effect? If not now, when can we take a step back, rethink our frenetic fossil fueled lifestyle, extravagant travel and consumption behavior? Rethink everything. Start with the organizing principle of the carbon budget. Find the money and political will to do something about it. No more permits to pollute.

We have the rare chance to get real about capping further climate pollution and commit to restoring a livable climate for all. Paris said whatever you do, don't even think of going past 2deg C. But here we are at 1.1 with 1.5+ baked in. Like the virus, it looks far away, then it hits. Exponentially rising heat is hitting us right now. We have to plan on overshoot. Every day we do nothing - or enact a cowardly half-way measure - adds to exponential increases in hothouse effects and suffering. What is St. Helena's plan?

The UNEP's new interactive report is blunt. 7.6% reduction in carbon emissions, each year for the next 10 years, starting this year. Does the City of St. Helena recognize the fundamental climatic emergency? Will it require the Farmstead at Long Meadow Ranch Restaurant and Lodging Project to result in immediate emissions reductions in conformance to the goal?
<https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/>

The Climate Center's new Climate-Safe California campaign is blunt. Emissions reductions and increased carbon sequestration to achieve net negative emissions by 2030. Their endorsement platform provides details. Does the Farmstead at Long Meadow Ranch Restaurant and Lodging Project result in rapid decarbonization -10% per year - consistent with the plan?
<https://theclimatecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Platform-Climate-Safe-CA-Mar-30-2020.pdf>

Governor Brown's recent (2018) [Executive Order B-55-18](#) sets a goal of "...carbon neutrality as soon as possible and no later than 2045." (The target is often misrepresented as 2045; "as soon

as possible” really means “as soon as possible!”) How does the City of St. Helena interpret the order?

In June of last year, the St. Helena City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Countywide Commitment to Address Climate Change. It reads, in part:

WHEREAS, on October 8, 2018, the IPCC released a report, “Global Warming of 1.5°C,” which states that “Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society,” and projected that the earth could reach and exceed this temperature threshold by as early as 2030, far earlier than previously anticipated; and

*WHEREAS, Climate modelling shows that **it is not possible to stabilize global mean temperature rise at or below 1.5°C without undertaking additional pre-2030 climate mitigation and restoration actions** focused on reducing radiative forcing levels associated with excess trapped heat. These urgent actions are additional and complementary to current efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions being undertaken by the state; and...*

Unfortunately, the above proclamation stopped short of declaring a climate emergency. But importantly, it does recognize that urgent additional measures are needed. The City of St. Helena joined the effort. What emergency countermeasures has it contributed to the cause over the past year? Will it require the project be consistent with the massive emissions reductions called for?

Students voiced hope and frustration in public comment during last month’s Climate Action Committee (CAC) meeting. Their climate emergency resolution was adopted last May by NVUSD, and calls for leaders to acknowledge the climate emergency exists and threatens the residents of Napa County and the entire world. It calls for leaders to respond with the necessary emergency actions to achieve net zero climate pollution by or before 2030. They asked that the CAC support their pledge and acknowledge the climate emergency, and mobilize to stop it. They haven’t heard back. What is the City of St. Helena’s position on climate leadership and accountability? How does that position guide its decisions on discretionary polluting projects?

The NVUSD climate emergency declaration reads, in part:

*WHEREAS , **today’s children represent a particularly vulnerable group** because increasing greenhouse gases and trapped heat will almost certainly have a profound negative impact throughout their lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,*

*WHEREAS , the global impact, urgency, and magnitude of the challenge of addressing climate change calls for courageous leadership in all sectors of society, in all institutions and from all elected leaders; and all those in positions of power must be held accountable. To preserve the health and longevity of the Earth for generations to come, **leaders need to acknowledge that a climate emergency threatens the residents of Napa County and the entire world, and they must respond with the necessary emergency measures; and...***

The following is a small sampling of entities that have set a target date of 2030 (or sooner) for **net zero emissions** or **carbon neutrality**:

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Target date</u>
Norway	2030
Uruguay	2030
Church of England	2030
Adelaide, Australia	2025
Melbourne, Australia	2020
Copenhagen, Denmark	2025
Birmingham, England	2030
Bristol, England	2030
Liverpool, England	2030
Oslo, Norway	2030
Asheville, NC	2030
Burlington, VT	2030
Montpelier, VT	2030
Chico, CA	2030
Hoboken, NJ	2027
Sacramento, CA	2030
Portland, ME	2030
Worcester, MA	2030
Los Angeles, CA	2030
UC System	2025
Over 700 B Corps	2030
Microsoft	2030

In addition, **two of our neighbors** in Sonoma County passed Climate Emergency Resolutions that clearly state a 2030 target date for net zero emissions. They are:

[Santa Rosa](#): "...with the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030."

[Sebastopol](#): "...reducing city-wide greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by no later than 2030"

How do they do it? Find out now. Climate breakdown is a global problem needing global, collective, systemic solutions at every level. Our life path has changed for all of us. It's hard to handle but there's no denying we need to get busy. Where does the City of St. Helena stand?

"We are careening towards the edge of the abyss. It is not too late to shift course, but every day that passes means the world heats up a little more and the cost of our inaction mounts. Every day we fail to act is a day that we step a little closer towards a fate that none of us wants -- a fate that will resonate through generations in the damage done to humankind and life on earth. Our fate is in our hands. The world is counting on all of us to rise to the challenge before it's too late."

— UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, September 10, 2018

Is it too late? Ultimately what I think doesn't matter. What does the City of St. Helena think? If

you read the science, it's perfectly obvious. If you ignore it any more, it's self-sabotage. How can I help make it any more clear? It's upsetting. If there's something most upsetting to you, I want to hear about it. But does St. Helena just move on like there's nothing to be done? Is it even a question anymore whether there's something to be done or not? Are you going to go home and continue reading the science over again and get back to us when you're done?

I just want to breathe and get well. We won't survive without results. That includes yours.

With appreciation,
Jim Wilson
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