

teleconference

Bob,

Here are some thoughts on  
The S, C, 's future. I left you  
a phone message re the  
March 21<sup>st</sup> conf. which the  
initial pages cover. Offerman  
(Lacey's office) Gail & I spoke today  
and there is generally positive  
interest. Please look over ASAP  
JDB

So I can pass on mat<sup>ls</sup> to Gail & Stoe  
Friday

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Ventura county's citizens enjoy a unique living environment. While urbanized and on the edge of the Los Angeles metropolis, a remarkable amount of open space and agricultural land has been preserved. It has been enjoyed by residents of the area as well as tourists who are attracted to openness. Importantly, these lands are also the foundation for a thriving agricultural industry.

This balance of urban and rural environments has come about because of the continual effort by many people and organizations to reach concensus on vital issues. The necessity to talk to one another is equally or more important today because the challenges are increasingly difficult to resolve. Unfortunately, our dialogue is too often divided along seemingly prescribed lines. Common ground is more difficult to define, particularly as the array of interests continue to fracture into smaller and smaller segments.

A new viewpoint is emerging that says we all share some basic common values whether we are speaking as individuals or corporations, and whether we are discussing the environment or social or economic issues. One such shared value is the need for sustainable systems, whether natural or man-made.

For the past two years a number of people and organizations under the leadership of the Navy at Port Hueneme have sponsored a conference on sustainability. The conference has been held in conjunction with a nationally televised debate sponsored by the ReNew America Foundation (headed by some of the nation's largest corporations) and the President's Council on Sustainability.

What has become apparant to sponsors of the local conference and many of its attendees is the need for a sustainable dialogue on issues of importance. Our tendency is to meet on an ad hoc basis when an emergency arises. We do not have a ready forum to engage in an on-going discussion of issues, nor share a common language in which to communicate.

On Friday, March 21st at 1:30 p.m. in the Lower Plaza Assembly Room at the County Government Center (Hall of Administration Bldg. 800 So. Victoria Ave.

Ventura, CA) we invite you to listen to speakers from several California organizations that have established on-going dialogs on issues of great importance to their communities. They will describe how the organizations were formed and sustained. Most importantly they will outline what they have been able to accomplish through their efforts.

For further information, please contact any of the following people:  
Todd Collart: 654-2468, Gail Pringle: \_\_\_\_\_, Steve Offerman: 654-\_\_\_\_, Maryanne Krause: 654-\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Chianese, Ventura County Sustainability Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commander, \_\_\_\_\_ Port Hueneme

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Lacey, Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathy Long, Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ District

dialog between their constituents so that meaningful partnerships can evolve to address issues of concern to the county's residents and businesses.

We ask for your co-sponsorship of the above discribed event to send a message that dialog should prevail over division and that elected official have a stake in a vital and engaged citizenry. We are also in need of a meeting facility and believe there are spaces that might be available at the County Government Center.

The speakers we have lined up are available on Friday, March 21st. One is associated with the Urban Ecology Center in the San Francisco Bay area. This organization has been in existence for \_\_\_ years and has just published an itegrated plan for the bay area that promotes a more sustainable future for that area. The plan has been adopted by a number of bay area jurisdictions and many more are expected to endorse the plan as well.

Another speaker is with the San Luis Obispo \_\_\_\_\_. This organization, like the first one, has its roots in the private citizen sector, but has been highly successful in gathering in a wide variety of interests throughout San Luis Obispo County to develop a shared vision for the county's future.

The last two individuals are from Santa Barbara County and represent established and relatively new organizations that have been successful in bridging the gaps between divergent interest groups in our sister county.

I have attached a draft outline of the session as well as its specific objectives. I have also drafted a letter of invitation that can serve as a basis of a shared letter by the sponsors of the event. I know you and your staffs are very busy, so I want to assure you that the Sustainabilty Council will shoulder the burden of most of the work.

Thank you for your interest in this project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Chianese, President  
Ventura County Sustainability Council

## SUSTAINING MEANINGFUL DIALOG

MARCH 21, 1997

1:30 TO 4:00

SIGN-IN: 1:00 TO 1:30

INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME - The sponsors (5 min.)

BACKGROUND OF EACH ORGANIZATION (5 min. each)

Urban Ecology Center

SLO

CEC

Sustainability Project

DISCUSSION PANEL OF SPEAKERS ADDRESSING: (45 min.)

What keeps the dialog going?

How have you been able to include new parties?

What are the roles of Non-governmental organizations (NGO)?

How did you environment shape your organization?

What has been your most difficult challenge?

How do you see your organization evolving?

How do you know when you have succeeded?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (15 min.)

BREAK (15 min)

AUDIANCE GROUPS DISCUSS HOW WE CAN SUSTAIN DIALOG (20 min)

REPORT OF GROUPS' THOUGHTS (10 min)

CLOSING REMARKS: the sponsors (5 min)

## OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOG CONFERENCE

Provide momentum to local efforts to promote sustainability

Create a track record that would position the Sustainability Council to receive grants

General Conference Nov. 96

League of Women Voters grant Dec. 96

Sunbow grant Jan. 97

Public forum on the restoration of Mugu Lagoon Jan. 97

Sustainability Conference at Port Hueneme Feb. 97

Incorporation begun Feb. 97

Sustainable Dialog conference Mar. 97

Money and Personal consumption values conference Apr. 97

Establish a pattern of hosting conferences on key issues that relate to sustainability

Add credibility to the organization as a viable entity

Garner support from the supervisors thereby raising the stature of the organization and the concept of sustainability

Foster the notion that contesting interest groups can come together because they can mutually discuss a sustainable future

Gain specific insights as to how other organizations are structured and sustain themselves

### PUNCH LINES

Invite individuals to join the Sustainability Council **(we must be ready)**

Invite individuals and organizations who are interested in establishing a forum for discussing issues of importance to leave a name address and phone

Encourage representative organizations to partner with each other in dialogs over important issues

## **THE SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL...**

**Is About Promoting Principles of Sustainability** - It cannot afford to abandon this key point. If it does there will be nothing to distinguish it from most other do-good and environmental organizations. A model is the Local Government Commission and its central mission of promoting "Livable Cities". This group is a NGO that is open to membership by government bureaucrats, politicians, business, and lay people. It did not dilute its ideas because some governmental jurisdictions did not like what it was doing.

**Is Organized Like the Foreign Affairs Council** - In that it may have some large benefactors (such as some corporations and foundations), but is also made up of individual members who join because of the overall purpose of the organization and the benefits it provides.

### **Serves the Following Primary Functions -**

**Host a monthly or quarterly forum** where a speaker of interest would speak to those gathered like the Foreign Affairs Council

**Serve as a clearing house** and network for people trying to connect on issues related to sustainability

**Become a "reference group"** that would be invited to participate in discussions, meetings, serve on committees, planning teams, etc, to represent the sustainability viewpoint in much the same way that the League of Women Voters is invited to represent the general public interest.

### **Provides the Following Benefits to Its Members -**

Roster of other individuals and organizations interested in sustainability

A newsletter listing meetings and conferences on topics related to sustainability

List of reference books, periodicals, articles and web sites

## TWO YEAR PLAN OF ACTION

Continue to elevate the topic of sustainability in the community through:  
letters to the editor  
sponsoring and co-sponsoring events  
establishing a regular column in the local paper to cover sustainable issues  
speaking at public forums while representing the Sustainability Council

Apply for non-profit, tax exempt status

Establish a structure for the organization that can be implemented as its non-profit status is received  
mailing list  
directors  
goals and objectives  
meeting schedule

Apply for non-profit status

Apply for grants for specific projects  
Hold two years of forums with speakers on selected topics  
Establishment of sustainable indicators

Publish articles in local newspaper dealing with sustainability

Is Not About the Establishment of a Permanent Organization with a Bureaucracy Trying to Perpetuate Itself - It should stay flexible and not depend on continual fundraising to maintain itself

Personal networking potential at meetings and conferences

Interesting speakers at regular forums

Avenues for individuals to become directly involved in projects that further principles of sustainability

A speakers bureau to discuss issues of sustainability

Non-profit, tax exempt status so it could accept donations

**Would be Informally Structured to Remain Flexible and Adaptable -**

Board of Directors - President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer  
(a working board whose members are self replacing)

Advisory Board - 12 or so general members who are called upon to provide advice to the Board of Directors (selected by the Board)

General Members - paid memberships ranging from individuals at low rates to cover postage and general expenses to corporate members who contribute in larger amounts

**Would Operate on a Pay As You Go Basis** - Such that its minimal expenses should be covered by its members, but major events that it sponsored would be paid for via specific grants from other parties. In so doing, if its projects did not have appeal to someone they could not be sustained.

**Fulfills the Following Needs -**

Utilizes the concept of sustainability as the new common ground where contesting interests can come together to discuss issues of concern.

Provides a focus for a new movement that views sustainability as a separate and distinct concept that unites widely different groups, from purchasing agents dealing with "total lifecycle cost analysis" to biologists trying to manage fish resource, to those seeking enduring institutions for our communities welfare.