

SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

11-29-99

The Sustainability Council of Ventura County is a 501c3 non profit corporation that was formed in _____ and incorporated in _____

Our mission is:

- 1.to BRING ABOUT a sustainable WORLD by promoting an equitable society, a sound economy and a healthy environment; or
- 2.to improve our long term quality of life while enhancing the natural and HUMAN MADE systems we all depend on; or
- 3.OMIT

DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

Sustainability is the ability to meet our present needs without

Compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Applying this maxim would suggest that we now leave enough fish in the sea so that fisheries can survive to feed future generations; that we do not contaminate our water making it undrinkable for our children and their children; that we do not squander a nation's wealth in the pursuit of the frivolous leaving future generation with crushing debt.

By sustainability we mean THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF social, economic and environmental systems that allow the present generation to meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

We recognize that there may be no final point of sustainability, but rather a continuing process in which each decision we make as individuals, organizations, communities, businesses, etc. can either move us closer TO OR FURTHER AWAY FROM sustaining life and human society on the planet or further away.

A system is sustainable if it can persist for extended periods of time if not indefinitely. The system can be a society, an economy, a biological region, etc. Sustainability does not imply a static system, but rather a dynamic one that is constantly adjusting to changing conditions to reach a

new TEMPORARY equilibrium. Change is always present because a given system is inexorably linked to other systems, each of which must adjust to changes emanating from elsewhere.

Change occurs in keeping with fundamental "laws of nature" such as the Laws of Thermodynamics and Physics, but also in response to less understood "laws" governing human behavior. Because this mix of interactions is so complex, a sustainable human society cannot be fully understood or planned for. As a result, there is seldom a perfect choice that advances sustainability. Rather, one makes the best choice possible from among limited options and strives to broaden future options. In this sense there are rarely any perfect solutions, only better choices that produce more sustainable outcomes. The Sustainability Council **COMMITS ITSELF TO** promoting decisions that lead to the most sustainable outcomes.

Sustainability COUNCIL OPERATIONS

OMIT:

We promote sustainability as an organization by looking for opportunities in the community to educate the public and decision-makers about the importance of seeking sustainable solutions to problems and presenting practical examples wherever possible. We seek out partnerships with other organizations in meeting our objectives. The projects we pursue are typically initiated by a small group with the agreement of the Council's Board of Directors. If a project succeeds it is because it has merit and galvanizes people into action. We see our mission as that of a catalyst. OMIT We have a bias for action and the initiation of long term change in the social, economic and environmental sectors that lead to more sustainable man-made and natural systems.

Organizationally we are composed of volunteers. The Board of Directors typically numbers 12 to 15 and vacancies are filled by the Board. The Board is ideally comprised of members with diverse disciplines, backgrounds and vocations, who are of various ages, races, economic standings; and who reside in different geographic areas of the county. The organization is managed and administered solely by the Board. An Advisory Board, appointed by the Board of Directors, provides advice and assistance in meeting the organization's mission and specific projects. General membership in the organization is open to any one who supports the mission of the organization. Dues are collected from all members of the organization, including the Board of Directors, to fund the activities of the organization and services to its members.

The Board of Directors meet regularly (typically monthly) to conduct the work of the Council. The meetings are informal and collegial, and rely on consensus and pragmatism to develop goals and implement specific tasks. This process requires patience, good humor, dedication, and the honest good will of one another. More importantly it requires a commitment to the Council's mission and to principles that define sustainability. Board members also agree to attend meetings regularly; abide by the regulations governing boards of non-profit 501c3 corporations and act in accordance with the organization's by laws.

Board members do the hands-on work of advancing the Council's mission by individually or collectively initiating projects. OMIT.. These include, but are not limited to, producing events and conferences, helping organize affiliated groups, cooperating in research projects relating to sustainability issues, producing reports and papers, writing grants, being public advocates for sustainability, and doing the mundane job of maintaining the organization. The Board sets the Council's agenda and makes sure it is running smoothly and in the right direction.

Meetings of the general membership are called on AS NEEDED. We prefer THAT supporters spend their time engaged in meaningful work, not tedious meetings. In this regard we urge our members to participate in one or more of the Board initiated projects as part of a fluid team that assembles for such individual projects then disbands upon their completion. The Board encourages people to initiate their own projects advancing sustainability and ask only that if these projects are to be done in the organization's name, that the project be first sanctioned by the Board.

As a 21st Century organization we intend to remain responsive to change and technological opportunities. We therefore invite members to participate via e-mail and our website (sustainabilitycouncil.org)as a matter of convenience and to promote rapid responses to challenges and opportunities. Doing so will also conserve valuable resources including the volunteer efforts of the Board of Directors and others engaged in work on behalf of the organization.

We invite you to become a member of the Sustainability Council. Before doing so look over the Council's list of accomplishments, current initiatives, and proposed projects. These can be found on our website along with an outline of the annual dues structure.