

We Must Rebuild for Resilience and Inclusion for All

Will the North Bay rise from the ashes by living up to the values we profess, or are we condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past that left us so vulnerable to this disaster?

Climate change has changed everything. As we rebuild our devastated lives and lands, we need to look past our demonstrably obsolete laws, General Plans, and business-as-usual rules, and finally get serious about disaster (e.g., drought, wildfire, earthquake, etc.) preparedness. To do so, we must be frank about our shortcomings to date, and commit to rebuilding for resilience and inclusion for all.

- Whereas the people of the Counties of Sonoma, Napa, Lake, Solano, and Mendocino have suffered immeasurably from the devastating effects of a cluster of simultaneous and exceptionally intense firestorms including the [Central LNU Complex](#) and the [Southern LNU Complex](#), and
- Whereas experienced fire management professionals and other eyewitnesses have reported that these firestorms were unprecedented in the ferocity, speed and scope of their destruction, and
- Whereas disaster preparedness experts have warned that poorly designed and/or maintained infrastructure (including electricity and gas distribution, water supply, and emergency alert systems, etc.), inadequate staffing, and insufficient training can cause or exacerbate the scope and horror of such events, and
- Whereas forest ecologists, urban planners, and climate scientists have warned that the overdevelopment of the Wildland-Urban Interface, improper management of wildland fuels, and the failure to halt greenhouse gas pollution all increase the likelihood that such catastrophic events will occur, and
- Whereas local economists and philanthropists have warned that the majority of residents were already struggling with stagnant real wages, rising income inequality, skyrocketing costs of healthcare, higher education, and housing before these fires hit, and
- Whereas journalists have reported that some residents are uninsured, and many more underinsured, and so without assistance will be unable to fully recover their financial losses, and
- Whereas, to date, our leaders in government, business, and civil society have all failed to take actions sufficient to protect us from suffering this tragic event and now its aftermath,

Therefore, to prevent negligent reconstruction from occurring we call on all local leaders to join together to plan and implement the following policy changes in all jurisdictions:

1. Update all electricity infrastructure, water infrastructure, and building codes to levels sufficient to prevent and survive events of the severity we just witnessed (or prepare to abandon the development of infrastructure and lands which cannot be cost-effectively defended)
2. In areas where rebuilding may be defensible, rezone single-family (R1) parcels to multifamily (R2, or other) to facilitate and expedite increased density development and to increase the ability of property owners to recover their losses.
3. Rezone and create alternative sources of financing to support the large scale development of affordable housing projects targeted for populations earning less than 120%, 100%, 80%, 60%, and 40% of the Average Median Income.
4. Incentivize and make a moral appeal to owners of unoccupied properties to provide access to displaced fire refugees, construction workers, and others who will help with this rebuilding for resilience effort
5. Adopt the [Bay Area Solar Photovoltaic Ordinance](#), and ensure it applies to all new construction, all additions >250 sq. ft., and all alterations over \$50,000.
6. Prohibit inherently unsafe natural gas (or propane) pipelines and appliances in all new construction, requiring all-electric alternatives instead (e.g., cost effective and highly energy efficient heat pumps for water and space heating).
7. Overhaul our inadequate emergency notification systems and set up decentralized neighborhood disaster preparedness councils that are trained and equipped to help themselves until traditional first responders can arrive.

We are committed to working through the details and supporting those leaders who have the courage to implement these measures in their jurisdictions. If ever there has been a time for leadership in our communities it is now.

Most Respectfully,

Members of the Sonoma Valley Climate Coalition

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