



SAN FRANCISCO
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Annual Report 2021



SF Environment

Our home. Our city. Our planet.

A Department of the City and County of San Francisco

Prepared by SF Environment

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the San Francisco Commission on the Environment is to improve, enhance, and preserve the environment while promoting San Francisco's long-term environmental sustainability as set forth in Section 4.118 of the City Charter. The Commission sets policy for the Department of the Environment and advises the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and other City departments on environmental matters. Appointed by the Mayor, the seven-member Commission helps develop policies and programs on a wide range of environmental topics including: zero waste, toxics reduction, environmental justice, clean air, transportation, energy efficiency, green building, habitat restoration, biodiversity, urban forestry, and greenhouse gas reductions.



(From L to R) Sarah Ching-Ting Wan, Eddie Ahn (Vice President), Mike Sullivan, Elmy Bermejo, Heather Stephenson (President), Johanna Wald. (Note, missing from photograph- Austin Hunter.)



LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT

Mayor Breed, Members of the Board of Supervisors, Friends, and Colleagues:

2021 was a remarkable year for the Commission on the Environment. Virtual meetings became the norm while the pandemic continued around the globe. Yet, San Francisco still took major steps towards prioritizing climate efforts and providing adequate resources for the Department.

As a Commission, we strongly advocated for more resources from the City in a way we've never done before. San Francisco's climate community rallied with us and bolstered our ask of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to fund a climate equity action hub and a long-term funding solutions study. Both the Commission and the community made it clear that we need to pull out all the stops to achieve the City's ambitious climate mandates and carry out our comprehensive Climate Plan. And our advocacy worked: we received funding from the City for our climate work – a first. While the levels were modest, it's a start, and I expect that this indication of support from the City will only continue to grow.

Earlier in the year, as a prelude to the forthcoming Climate Action Plan, the Mayor introduced and passed through the Board of Supervisors an update to Chapter 9 of the City's Environment Code. It codified the goals that formed the foundation of the Climate Action Plan and represents an important alignment of priorities between the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor. I am proud that this Commission was able to help shape the Department's codification of the goals in the Climate Action Plan into the City's environmental code.

In December, the Mayor released the City's new Climate Action Plan. Community-led and data-driven, this collaborative approach to the urban climate will make San Francisco a net-zero emission City by 2040. The comprehensive Plan identifies strategies and actions in six key areas: energy supply, building operations, transportation and land use, housing, responsible production and consumption, and healthy ecosystems. Most importantly, the Plan meets the parallel goals of building greater racial and social equity by directing that we protect and uplift our most vulnerable communities from the devastating impacts of climate change.

Day-by-day, we continue to witness the impacts of climate change all around us. With our newfound support, we must continue to rise to the occasion and meet the ongoing challenge of climate change. This Commission and the Department stand ready to continue the work of innovating, inspiring, and leading as San Francisco works to respond to the climate crisis and to create a green and equitable city for all San Franciscans.

Sincerely,

Heather Stephenson
President, San Francisco Commission on the Environment



APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER AUSTIN HUNTER

Commissioner Austin Hunter was appointed to the Commission of the Environment by Mayor London Breed on June 15th, 2021. Commissioner Hunter brings with him a passion for solution-based policy and experience as an elected Assembly Delegate with the California Democratic Party. Prior to being appointed, he was part of the Public Utilities Commission Citizen Advisory Committee. Commissioner Hunter currently serves on the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters board where he works on an array of environmental policy issues. Founding his high school's first-ever environmental club with friends, Hunter's passion for the environment started as a teenager.

In his first year as commissioner, he hopes to promote legislative policies that help the department meet set goals in the City's Climate Action Plan. As an avid plant-lover and student at Golden Gate University School of Law, Commissioner Hunter is most interested in ensuring all communities and neighborhoods within San Francisco are equitably served and accounted for through environmental legislation and other environmental resources.





CODE TENDERLOIN

COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

Presented to

SARAH WAN

for being a brilliant leader and community builder in the Greater Tenderloin neighborhood.

Donna Hilliard
DONNA HILLIARD
 Executive Director
 Code Tenderloin

Del Seymour
DEL SEYMOUR
 Founder
 Code Tenderloin

REAPPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER SARAH WAN

Commissioner Sarah Ching-Ting Wan was reappointed to the Commission on the Environment by Mayor London Breed on August 15th, 2021. Before moving to the United States at age 16, Commissioner Wan grew up in Hong Kong, developing her passion for immigrant communities at an early age. She previously served on the Juvenile Probation Commission from 2010 to 2013 and brought with her the desire to represent and amplify communities of color, specifically Asian-Americans in San Francisco. As the Executive Director of the Community Youth Center, Commissioner Wan engages in a variety of government and community relations, with particular emphasis on uplifting the youth in her community.

On the Commission, she is interested in exploring ways to achieve zero waste from an accessibility standpoint and wants to ensure the Department’s Racial Equity Action Plan is reflected in all its activities. As Commissioner, she hopes to ensure policy caters to the diversity of the Bay Area, focusing on those with cultural barriers in the City. She values community-driven policy and looks for ways to bridge the gap between San Francisco residents and the Department.



2021 COMMISSION MILESTONES

2021 was the 25th anniversary of the Commission on the Environment. The Commission's first commissioners were sworn in in 1996. At that time, they provided direction for the Department of the Environment to engage in a citywide effort to publish the first Sustainability Plan for the City of San Francisco. This Plan was later adopted by the Board of Supervisors the following year. It's not a coincidence that in December 2021, the Mayor released her bold, new Climate Action Plan that no doubt rested on the foundation that the Commission on the Environment laid in 1996.

2021 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

COMMISSION LETTERS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT FUNDING

As part of the Department's budget process, the draft budget was shared with the Commission during public meetings in the first few months of the year. At those meetings, the Commission was clear in its desire to ensure adequate funding for the Department's climate work and the upcoming Climate Action Plan. After receiving numerous calls and public comment regarding the urgent need for additional funding, the Commission decided to issue a resolution and write letters to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors regarding the current lack of long-term, sustainable sources of funding for the Department. These communications urged City leadership to appropriately fund the Department's efforts to combat climate change now as well as going forward. After they were issued, the Department received additional funding to support the development of a long-term funding mechanism for the Department and a Climate Equity Action Hub.

2021 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS *continued*

RAMAYTUSH OHLONE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the beginning of the year, the Commission worked with Sharaya Souza from the American Indian Cultural District and Gregg Castro of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone to develop a land acknowledgement to be read at the beginning of all Commission meetings, including subcommittee meetings. This was an important initiative to undertake, not only because it is part of The Office of Racial Equity’s Action Plan for City Commissions, but also because it bolstered conversations around the role of traditional ecological knowledge in fighting for the planet. The acknowledgement states that we must honor those to whom our land rightfully belongs and who have been stewards of the earth for a millennium. This partnership will continue to inform Department decisions and planning for future programs, and we recognize that we still have much to learn from the traditional ways of caring for our planet.



Historic Location of Ramaytush Ohlone Tribe

By Noahedits - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=83967945>

2021 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS *continued*

CHAPTER 9 CLIMATE CODE UPDATE AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In May, the Commission’s Policy Subcommittee heard a presentation from staff about the Mayor’s potential update to Chapter 9 of the City’s Environment Code. The Commission then asked the Board of Supervisors to approve the Chapter 9 update, which they subsequently did. Chapter 9 codifies the climate goals in the City’s Climate Action Plan and represents an important union of thought and focus between the Mayor and the Board. With that union, the Mayor then released the City’s Climate Action Plan in December 2021. The Department and the Commission have been helping to shape the Mayor’s Climate Action Plan for several years now and this work represents a major milestone for the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, the Commission, and San Francisco residents and businesses.

DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

In September, the Commission was presented the updated Strategic Plan as well as the process that was undertaken to make the necessary revisions. Its refresh was an important prelude to the launch of the Mayor’s new Climate Action Plan. Staggering the releases of these initiatives ensures the Department’s Strategic Plan reflects the priorities of the Climate Action Plan.



2021 COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS *continued*

CLIMATE PARTNERS

While the Department leads implementation and development of environmental policy for the City, it does not do this work alone. The Commission and the Department rely on numerous diverse and incredibly talented partners to help develop, implement, and co-lead on a variety of environmental initiatives. Over the past few years, the Commission has heard from a variety of partners on a long list of topics, including:

- The San Francisco Market – regarding the Commission’s Environmental Service Award
- The Natural Resources Defense Council – commenting on the Annual Report on the Antibiotic Use in Food Animals Ordinance
- Supervisor Ahsha Safai – regarding the construction and demolition debris ordinance
- San Francisco County Transportation Authority – presenting progress on the congestion pricing initiative
- San Francisco’s Economic Recovery Task Force – concerning the City’s recovery efforts
- Department of Human Resources – about the Department’s Racial Equity Action Plan
- American Indian Cultural District – regarding the land acknowledgement
- Brightline Defense – presenting on air quality monitoring
- Central City SRO Collaborative – presenting on air quality monitoring
- Community Youth Center – concerning air quality monitoring
- SPUR – discussing the Climate Action Plan
- Department of Public Health – about Fix Lead SF
- Climate Emergency Coalition – concerning a wide array of climate issues as well as the Department’s budget

COMMISSION DEMOGRAPHICS

As part of our Racial Equity Action Plan, the Commissioners fulfilled an obligation to complete a demographic data census. A 2008 City Charter Amendment, passed by the voters, authorized the Department on the Status of Women to analyze and report the diversity of appointments for City boards and commissions every two years. Through voluntary participation of the survey, the Commission on the Environment continues to support the City in its diversity goals.

The Commission on the Environment has 7 seats total, 7 filled. 4 female and 3 male of which 2 are LGBTQIA+ identifying members, 2 Asian, 4 white, 1 Latinx.

COMMISSION TERMS

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Johanna Wald 5th Term: | March 26, 2019 – March 10, 2023 |
| Heather Stephenson 3rd Term: | May 6, 2019 – April 20, 2023 |
| Sarah Ching-Ting Wan 3rd Term: | May 11, 2021 – May 11, 2025 |
| Elmy Bermejo 3rd Term: | October 14, 2020 – October 14, 2025 |
| Eddie Ahn 2nd Term: | March 26, 2019 – March 25, 2023 |
| Mike Sullivan 2nd Term: | August 1, 2019 – July 23, 2023 |
| Austin Hunter 1st Term: | May 27, 2021 – March 25, 2023 |

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Environment's Policy Subcommittee meets monthly to oversee long-term planning and policy development for the Department, including the assessment of environmental conditions and review of the City's long-term environmental sustainability plans.

In 2021, the Policy Committee heard presentations on the Consumption-based Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report, the Department's Electric Vehicle Program, the City's Update to the General Plan, Medium- and Heavy-Duty Truck Blueprint Grant, amendments to Environment Code Chapter 9, the Draft 2020 Annual Buy Green Report, Building Material Reuse, SFCTA Congestion Management Initiative, BayREN, 2021 Reduced Risk Pesticide List for City properties, State Level Policy on Food Waste, Reusable Foodware Campaigns, Updates to Chapter 7 of the Environment Code, and the Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Environment's Operations Subcommittee meets quarterly. The Committee oversees public education and community outreach on environmental issues.

In 2021, the Operations Committee discussed the Department's budget, reusable bag distribution project, the Department's office move, SFRecycles.org, the Treasure Island Development Authority, the Department's branding efforts, the Healthy Homes & Healthy Child Care Project of a nap map swap out program, food waste market research, record retention, and the racial equity assessment tool.

More information about commissions hearings and presentations can be found at [SFEnvironment.org](https://www.sfenvironment.org).

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE AWARDS



San Francisco’s Commission on the Environment strives to recognize individuals and organizations that help the Commission and Department fulfill their joint mission of conducting public education and outreach on environmental issues and supporting long-term sustainability in the City. Each year, the Commission on the Environment recognizes individuals and organizations that embody the City’s pursuit of long-term sustainability and environmental public education. In 2021, Environmental Service Awards were awarded to:

February 1st

Julian Potter for her 15 years of service for the City and County of San Francisco and her work on the San Francisco International Airport's sustainability initiatives.

March 23rd

Neha Gupta for her service as the Commission and the Department's chief legal advisor while working for the City Attorney's Office.

May 25th

Tiffany Chu for her contributions as a commissioner on the Commission on the Environment.

Dan Flanagan for his retirement in civil service and recognition for his term on the Urban Forestry Council.

July 27th

Jo Licata for 30 years of service in the hospitality industry and for her dedicated efforts helping San Francisco move the needle towards zero waste.

September 28th

Lena Huang, a student at the San Francisco Unified School District, for her advocacy and volunteerism for the environment.

December 7th

Julia Strzesieski for leading the sustainability efforts of Cole Hardware across the City and for modeling the kind of public-private partnership that are essential to achieving Departmental goals in a variety of areas.

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Approved Department of the Environment's Fiscal Year 2021-22 and 2022-23 Budget on February 1, 2021

Approved Commission on the Environment 2020 Annual Report on February 1, 2021

Approved Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement
(Resolution File 2021-01-COE signed on February 1, 2021)

Approved action addressing short-term and long-term funding concerns for critical department programs
(Resolution File 2021-02-COE signed on March 23, 2021)

Approved Action urging the Board of Supervisors to support proposed Ordinance Board of Supervisors File No. 201151 (Construction and Demolition Debris Ordinance)
(Resolution File 2020-04-COE signed on March 23, 2021)

Approved sending a letter to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to support a long-term funding solution for the Department of the Environment on May 25, 2021

Approved funding for the San Francisco Zero Waste Grants
(Resolution File No. 2021-03-COE signed on May 25, 2021)

Approved urging the Board of Supervisors to support a proposed ordinance amending the Environment Code to update the City’s climate action goals and planning process, and establish departmental roles and responsibilities
(Resolution File No. 2021-04-COE signed on May 25, 2021)

Approved sending a letter to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors addressing additional funding for equitable and sustainable climate action on May 25, 2021

Approved the 2020 Annual Buy Green Report on July 27, 2021

Approved adopting the 2021 Reduced Risk Pesticide List for city properties
(Resolution File 2021-04-COE on September 28, 2021)





2021 Annual Report
San Francisco Commission on the Environment

Prepared by:
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[SFEnvironment.org](https://www.sfenvironment.org)



Illustrations by Eddie Ahn, Department of the Environment
Commissioner and local San Francisco artist

Please consider the environment when printing this document.