



SAN FRANCISCO
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Annual Report 2023



SAN FRANCISCO
ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT

Prepared by San Francisco Environment Department
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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 laid out in Section 4.118 of the City Charter. The Commission sets policy for San Francisco Environment Department 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: climate action, zero waste, toxics reduction, environmental justice, clean air, transportation, energy efficiency, green building, habitat restoration, biodiversity, urban forestry, and greenhouse gas reductions.



From left: Elmy Bermejo, Angelique Tompkins, Eddie Ahn (President), Austin Hunter, Vince Yuen, Mike Sullivan. Sarah Ching-Ting Wan (Vice President) is absent.



LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT

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

For nearly three decades, the Commission on the Environment has worked to advance San Francisco's environmental mission to build a more sustainable and resilient city. From universal composting to our ambitious Climate Action Plan, San Francisco's environmental record has resonated far beyond our city's borders, setting an example for cities across our nation and around the world.

As 2023 demonstrated, our Commission remains more relevant – and our work, more urgent – than ever. From imperiled ecosystems and smoggy skies to hurricanes and heat waves of remarkable ferocity, this past year – the hottest in recorded history – laid bare the stakes of the climate crisis. In San Francisco, winter storms battered our urban forest while wildfire smoke again descended on our neighborhoods — hazards that only grow over time.

Notwithstanding the scope and complexity of these challenges, the past year was not without hope, and included signs of key progress. Consider the Inflation Reduction Act, the largest climate investment in American history, which promises billions in green technology and environmental justice programs. This and similar commitments from the state will shape San Francisco for decades to come, and their impact has only begun to resonate.

When our state and federal leadership have taken bold steps to promote innovation and green jobs, it is vital that San Francisco stay the course and uphold its reputation as a climate pioneer. At the same time, our commitment to achieving the goals of the 2021 Climate Action Plan is unshakable. Already, we have seen real progress. San Francisco has slashed its greenhouse gas emissions by 48% since 1990 — a remarkable feat, particularly when our city's population grew by 17% over the same period. As we enter the next phase of our climate work, we must center our efforts on the needs and lived experiences of the most vulnerable, including the residents and neighborhoods most likely to bear the brunt of climate impacts.

Few entities will shape this work like the San Francisco Environment Department, and the Commission was encouraged by Mayor Breed's appointment of Tyrone Jue as the Department's next Director. We look forward to a long and fruitful partnership rooted in a commitment to environmental justice and a belief that climate innovation is central to our city's economic recovery.

As we reflect on a momentous year, I want to express my gratitude to Commissioners Heather Stephenson and Johanna Wald, whose legacy of integrity and stewardship will be felt for years to come. I also want to welcome Angelique Tompkins and Vince Yuen, who joined the Commission this fall. I have no doubt they will be thoughtful and spirited partners in the work ahead.

This work cannot be done alone. A lasting climate transition demands more than passive participation. It requires all of us – from city leaders and policymakers to residents and businesses – to do our part. I invite you, residents and neighbors, to join us in this fight. Together, we can build a city that not only survives, but thrives in the face of change.

Eddie Ahn, President, San Francisco Commission on the Environment



2023 COMMISSION MILESTONES

A NEW ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

Beginning in spring 2022, the Commission began the task of finding the Environment Department's next Executive Director. To support this effort, the Commission instituted a Search Committee, which included Commissioners Eddie Ahn, Elmy Bermejo, and Johanna Wald, as well as Lowell Chu, Energy Program Manager at the Environment Department, and Sarah Owens, Manager for Federal and State Legislative Affairs at the Mayor's Office. The Committee convened several times in late 2022 and early 2023 to orchestrate a nationwide search effort.

After reviewing a preliminary list of candidates and conducting an initial round of interviews, the Committee voted to advance several finalists to the full Commission for further evaluation. After a second round of interviews, the Commission voted to submit a slate of candidates to Mayor Breed for her consideration. On July 11, 2023, Mayor Breed announced her selection of Tyrone Jue, who previously served as the Environment Department's Acting Director since April 2022, as the Department's next permanent Director. Jue is the first Asian-American and first person of color to lead the Department.



2023 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Climate Action Plan implementation continues to rank among the Commission’s top priorities. In March, the Commission received an update on the 2020 Communitywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, which identified a 48% reduction in San Francisco’s emissions since 1990, as well as reporting dashboards intended to communicate progress to the public. Commissioners provided feedback on the dashboards and recommendations on how to engage and educate residents on the City’s efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

In mid-2023, the Commission began an ongoing presentation series highlighting the individual chapters of the Climate Action Plan. In September, the Commission heard a presentation on the Climate Action Plan’s Water Supply Addendum from the Environment Department and the Public Utilities Commission’s Water Resources Division. The addendum includes strategies to reduce water consumption, implement innovative projects, and supply augmentation programs to San Francisco residents. In October, the Commission heard a second presentation on the Plan’s Healthy Ecosystems Chapter, which is intended to promote climate resilience by optimizing biodiversity in open spaces and San Francisco’s built environment. Commissioners offered feedback on strategies for sequestering carbon, restoring ecosystems, and conserving biodiversity – all designed to achieve the City’s goal of sequestering 800,000 annual metric tons of carbon dioxide by 2024.



2023 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

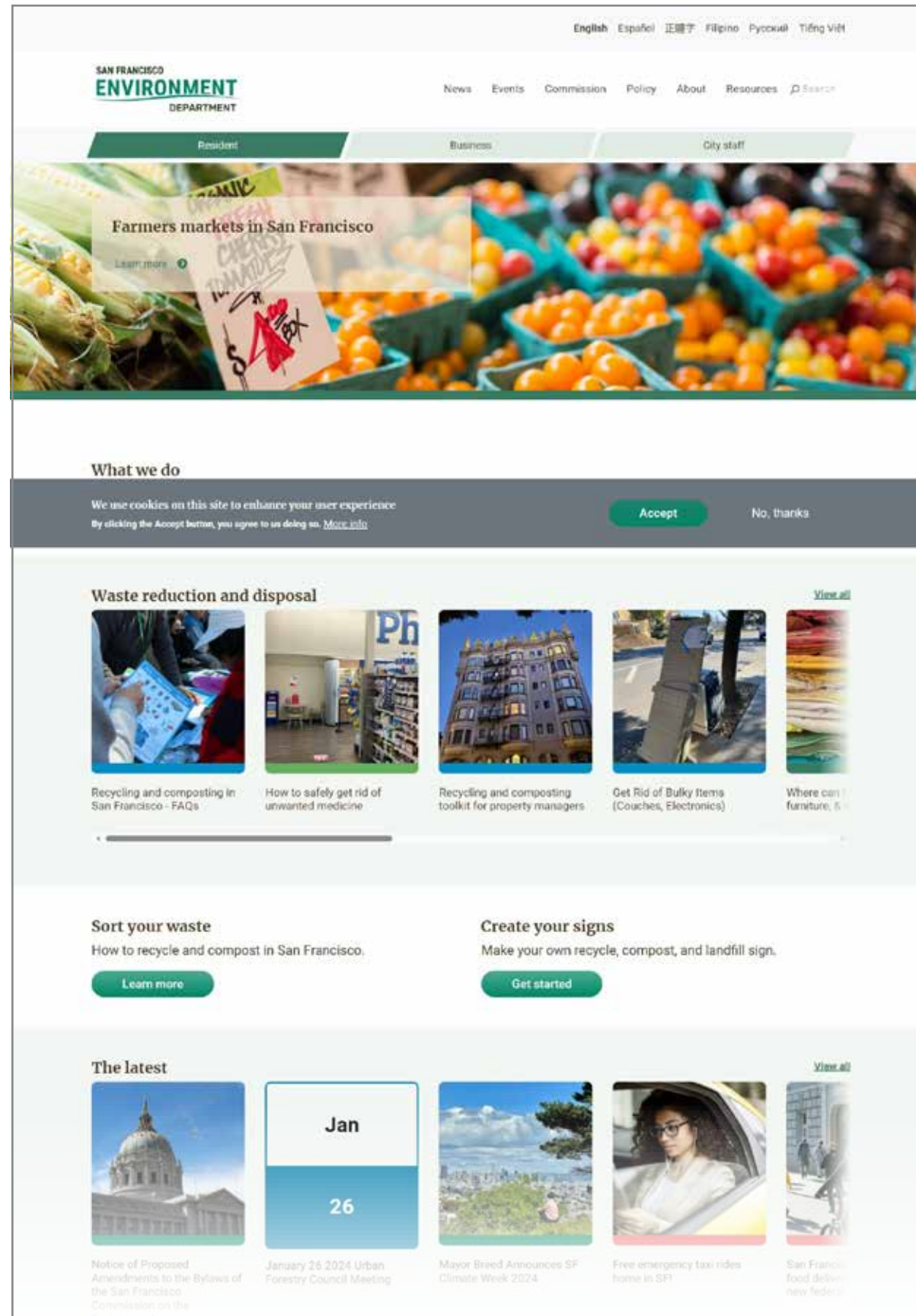
FUNDING FOR KEY RESOURCES

The Commission continued to advocate for the resources needed to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan. In May, the Environment Department secured a landmark \$1.5 million in ongoing General Fund resources as part of Mayor Breed’s \$14.6 billion budget. The Department’s largest allocation of General Funds in 20 years, these funds will support the Department’s retention and hiring goals and ongoing climate programs. San Francisco remains committed to advancing climate resilience, and this investment reflects the Department and the Commission’s focus on deepening San Francisco’s legacy of environmental stewardship while advancing initiatives to build a healthier, more equitable future.

A REVISED REFUSE RATE

As part of its Zero Waste work, the Commission provided feedback on proposed changes to San Francisco’s refuse rate for the next two fiscal years. In March, the Commission heard a joint presentation from the Controller’s Office, the Environment Department, and Recology Inc. on the refuse rate-setting process, with a focus on the need for a reasonable refuse rate and continuing incentives for San Francisco’s Zero Waste programs. Commissioners discussed strategies to promote Zero Waste, including contamination monitoring, financial incentives, and other opportunities for residential and commercial rate payers. In May, the Commission heard a second refuse rate presentation and approved a resolution encouraging the Refuse Rate Administrator and the Refuse Rate Board to adopt a refuse rate adjustment for 2024 and 2025 that advances the City’s Zero Waste priorities. The anticipated refuse rate increases for 2024 and 2025 are 1.33% and 2.55%, respectively.





2023 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

A TRANSFORMED WEBSITE

In January 2023, the Commission’s Operations Committee heard a presentation and offered feedback on priorities for a revised Environment Department website, including the need for a cohesive design, multilingual access, and stronger alignment with existing City resources. The Department returned to the full Commission in October with a final presentation and demonstration of the updated website, which represented the site’s most significant overhaul since 2012. As the Department website doubles as the Commission’s website, these improvements will enhance the accessibility of Commission resources, including the Commission’s meeting calendar, agendas and meeting materials, audio and video recordings, and reports.

A STREAMLINED COMMISSION

In August, the Commission approved amendments to its Bylaws regarding the Commission’s meeting schedule, the role of the Commission’s subcommittees, and the rights and privileges of Commissioners taking parental leave. Intended to promote the Commission’s responsiveness to the Environment Department’s contracting and grantmaking needs and the overall efficiency of Commission meetings, the amendments introduce four additional regular meetings of the full Commission throughout the year and transition the Commission’s standing committees from a regular meeting schedule to an ad hoc role. To maintain a consistent meeting location in City Hall, the Commission also shifted its meeting schedule from Tuesdays to Mondays. As a result of these amendments, regular Commission meetings will be held on the first Monday of February, the fourth Monday of March, April, May, June, July, August, September, and October, and the first Monday of December in City Hall, Room 408, at 5:00 p.m.



POLICY COMMITTEE

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

In 2023, the Policy Committee heard presentations on a reusable food service ware ordinance and building material reuse work related to the City’s Climate Action Plan (February 13).

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Environment’s Operations Committee meets as needed to oversee public education and community outreach on environmental issues.

In 2023, the Operations Committee heard presentations on the Department’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2023-24 and the Environment Department website (January 9).

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee met as needed to oversee the recruitment process for the Environment Department’s Executive Director.

The Search Committee evaluated candidate applications (February 9) and conducted closed session interviews with semi-finalists (February 23, February 24, and February 28).

COMMISSION ELECTIONS

On February 7, the Commission held elections for the positions of Commission President and Vice President. Commissioner Eddie Ahn was re-elected to the position of President for the second year. Commissioner Sarah Ching-Ting Wan was elected to the position of Vice President.

COMMISSION DEMOGRAPHICS

As part of the Environment Department Racial Equity Action Plan, Commissioners fulfilled an obligation to complete a demographic census. A 2008 City Charter Amendment, passed by the voters, authorized the Department on the Status of Women to complete a biennial analysis and report on the diversity of appointments for City boards and commissions. By voluntarily participating in this survey, the Commission on the Environment continues to support the City in its diversity goals.

The Commission on the Environment has a total of seven seats, seven of which are filled. There are three female and four male Commissioners, including two who identify as LGBTQIA+. In addition, the Commission includes three Asian, one Black/African American, one Latinx/Hispanic, and two White/Caucasian members.

COMMISSION TERMS

Eddie Ahn (third term):	August 29, 2023 – March 25, 2027
Elmy Bermejo (third term):	October 14, 2020 – October 14, 2025
Austin Hunter (second term):	August 29, 2023 – March 25, 2027
Heather Stephenson (third term):	May 6, 2019 – April 20, 2023
Mike Sullivan (third term):	August 29, 2023 – July 23, 2027
Angelique Tompkins (first term):	September 23, 2023 – April 20, 2027
Johanna Wald (fifth term):	March 26, 2019 – March 10, 2023
Sarah Ching-Ting Wan (third term):	May 11, 2021 – May 11, 2025
Vince Yuen (first term):	October 30, 2023 – March 10, 2027

RETIREMENT OF COMMISSIONERS JOHANNA WALD AND HEATHER STEPHENSON

Commissioner Johanna Wald retired from the Commission on the Environment on March 10, 2023. First appointed by Mayor Willie Brown in 2003, Commissioner Wald is the longest-serving member in the Commission’s history. Throughout her two decades of service, Commissioner Wald demonstrated unwavering dedication to improving environmental and human health for all who call San Francisco home. Drawing on four decades of experience as an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, she brought a keen analytical eye and a fastidious attention to detail that to every issue and initiative that came before the Commission, including the Department’s toxic reduction and integrated pest management work, which benefited enormously from her energy and insight. In August, the Commission voted to rename its Environmental Service Award in recognition of her unique impact on the Commission and on San Francisco.

Commissioner Heather Stephenson retired from the Commission on the Environment on April 20, 2023. First appointed by Mayor Ed Lee in 2011, Commissioner Stephenson was a staunch advocate for women in the environmental realm and a champion of gender and racial equity. As a longtime member of the Operations Committee, Commissioner Stephenson oversaw the development of the Environment Department’s Racial Equity Action Plan and played a key role in the Department’s annual budget process. As Commission President during the COVID-19 pandemic, Commissioner Stephenson also led the Commission through two years of remote meetings. Commissioner Stephenson’s legacy of stewardship, coalition-building, and commitment to environmental justice will continue to resonate.





APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER ANGELIQUE TOMPKINS

Angelique Tompkins was appointed to the Commission on the Environment by Mayor London Breed on September 23, 2023. A health technology professional with experience in the information technology, non-profit, and financial services sectors, she has served on numerous boards and community-based organizations fostering youth development, diversity, equity, and community engagement in San Francisco.

Commissioner Tompkins serves on the Board of Directors of the BayEcoarium, a climate resilience and ocean conservation organization, and the Advisory Committee of the EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park. She is a member of the Bayview Alliance, a consortium of professionals and community leaders in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhoods, and serves as Health and Human Services Chair of the San Francisco Chapter of The Links, a professional African American women's organization. She has been a driving force behind community efforts contributing to key policy developments, including California Senate Bill 1000, the San Francisco General Plan Environmental Justice Framework, and the San Francisco African American Reparations Plan, which have advanced essential Environmental Justice policies and priorities in San Francisco.

Commissioner Tompkins holds a B.S. in business administration and information systems from California State University, Long Beach. She lives in San Francisco and is the proud matriarch of her family.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER VINCE YUEN

Vince Yuen was appointed to the Commission on the Environment by Mayor London Breed on October 30. Commissioner Yuen is the founder of Refuse Refuse San Francisco, a grassroots volunteer effort dedicated to keeping San Francisco clean. After picking up trash with his two young daughters, Commissioner Yuen discovered that caring for San Francisco was his greatest passion. As of October 2023, the campaign had organized over 1,800 neighborhood cleanups and removed over 500,000 gallons of trash from San Francisco's streets, parks, and beaches. Commissioner Yuen is focused on keeping San Francisco clean by supporting neighborhood cleanups, educating the public on available resources, and building community through civic engagement and volunteerism. Commissioner Yuen holds a M.B.A from the UC San Diego Rady School of Management, where he was President of the Rady Entrepreneur Club. He lives in the Richmond District.

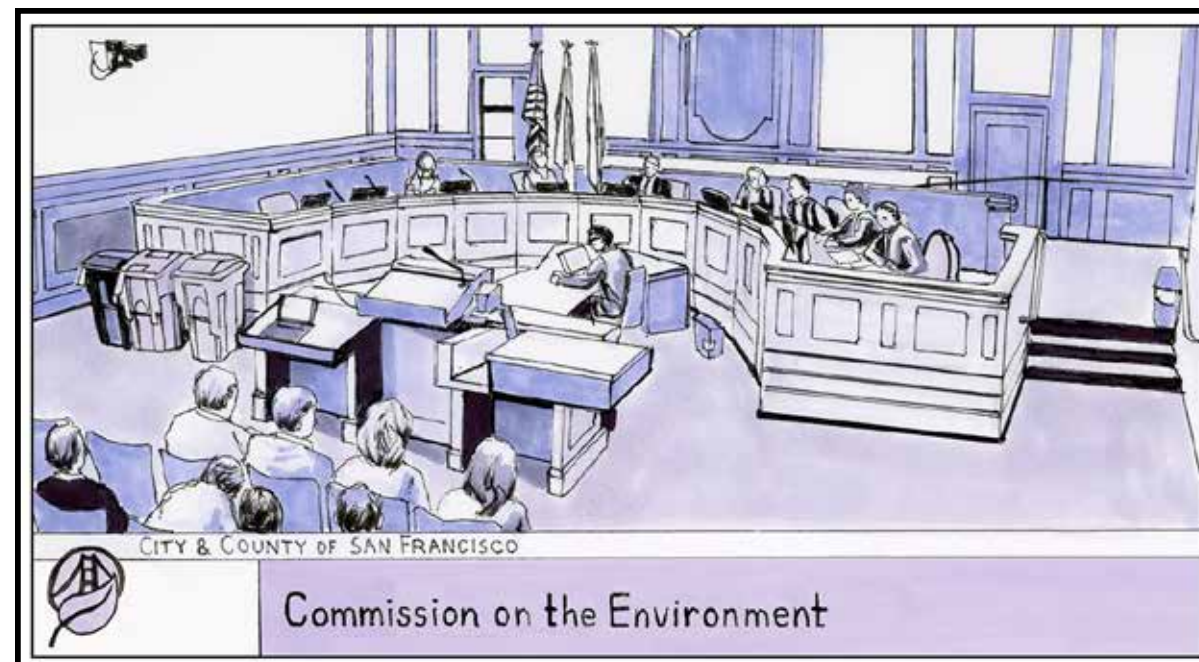


REAPPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONERS EDDIE AHN, AUSTIN HUNTER, AND MIKE SULLIVAN

Commissioner Eddie Ahn was reappointed to the Commission by Mayor London Breed on August 29. The Commission's President since 2022, Commissioner Ahn is the Executive Director of Brightline Defense, a public policy and legal non-profit dedicated to empowering communities and sustainable environments. Previously, Commissioner Ahn was an AmeriCorps member, serving as an afterschool programmer in Oakland's Chinatown. While working toward his law degree, he provided art and public speaking workshops for youth and worked on civil justice and environmental issues for the Assembly Judiciary Committee in Sacramento. Commissioner Ahn received a B.A. from Brown University and a J.D. from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco.

Commissioner Austin Hunter was reappointed to the Commission by Mayor London Breed on August 29. Commissioner Hunter's longstanding commitment to environmental causes traces back to his teenage years, when he founded his high school's first-ever environmental club. Commissioner Hunter is heavily involved in promoting environmental protections through his work on the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters Board and his previous role on the Public Utilities Commission's Citizen Advisory Committee. Commissioner Hunter holds a B.A. from San Francisco State University and a M.P.P. from King's College London. He also attends the Golden Gate University School of Law, where he has been awarded a full-tuition scholarship.

Commissioner Mike Sullivan was reappointed by Mayor London Breed to the Commission on the Environment on August 29. The author of *The Trees of San Francisco*, Commissioner Sullivan is a proud advocate for San Francisco's urban forest and previously served on the San Francisco Urban Forestry Council and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission. A strong proponent of clean energy and transportation, Commissioner Sullivan has chaired the Commission's Policy Committee since 2021. A partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, he holds a B.A. from Williams College and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. He resides in Cole Valley.





JOHANNA WALD ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE AWARDS

The Commission on the Environment strives to recognize individuals and organizations that help the Commission and the Environment Department fulfill their joint mission to conduct public education and outreach on environmental issues and support long-term sustainability in the City. On September 26, the Commission unanimously voted to rename the award the “Johanna Wald Environmental Service Award” in honor of Commissioner Wald’s record of public service and lifetime of environmental advocacy.

In 2023, the Commission presented the Johanna Wald Environmental Service Award to the following individuals and organizations:

FEBRUARY 7

Eden Brukman, for her transformative efforts to decarbonize San Francisco’s built environment.

MARCH 28

Garden for the Environment, for its robust biodiversity and sustainability programming.

MAY 23

Heather Stephenson, for her 12 years of service on the Commission on the Environment.

AUGUST 29

Matter of Trust, for its novel solutions to vexing environmental challenges.

SEPTEMBER 26

Johanna Wald, for her 20 years of service on the Commission on the Environment.

OCTOBER 30

Cara Gurney, for her creative environmental outreach and community engagement programs.



COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

- Approved a resolution authorizing Environment Department climate grants (Resolution File 2023-02-COE) on February 7.
- Approved the Environment Department's fiscal year 2023-24 budget and accompanying supplemental budget memo on February 7.
- Approved a resolution encouraging the adoption of Ordinance 221223, revising Chapter 7 of the Environment Code (Resolution File 2023-03-COE) on February 7.
- Approved the Commission on the Environment 2022 Annual Report on February 7.
- Approved a resolution encouraging the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to adopt a reusable food service ware ordinance to eliminate unnecessary single-use food service ware (Resolution file 2023-04-COE) on March 28.
- Approved a resolution authorizing Environment Department zero waste and environmental justice grants (Resolution File 2023-05-COE) on March 28.
- Approved a resolution authorizing Environment Department climate and clean transportation grants (Resolution File 2023-06-COE) on May 23.
- Approved a resolution authorizing an Environment Department clean transportation contract (Resolution File 2023-07-COE) on May 23.
- Approved a resolution encouraging the Refuse Rate Administrator and the Refuse Rate Board to approve a refuse rate adjustment for rate years 2024 and 2025 that helps San Francisco advance its zero waste and related climate goals (Resolution File 2023-08-COE) on May 23.
- Approved a resolution authorizing Environment Department environmental education grants (Resolution File 2023-09-COE) on August 29.
- Approved a resolution amending the provisions of the Commission on the Environmental Bylaws regarding meetings of the Commission, committees, and parental leave (Resolution File 2023-10-COE) on August 29.
- Approved a resolution amending an Environment Department energy efficiency contract (Resolution Files 2023-11-COE) on September 26.



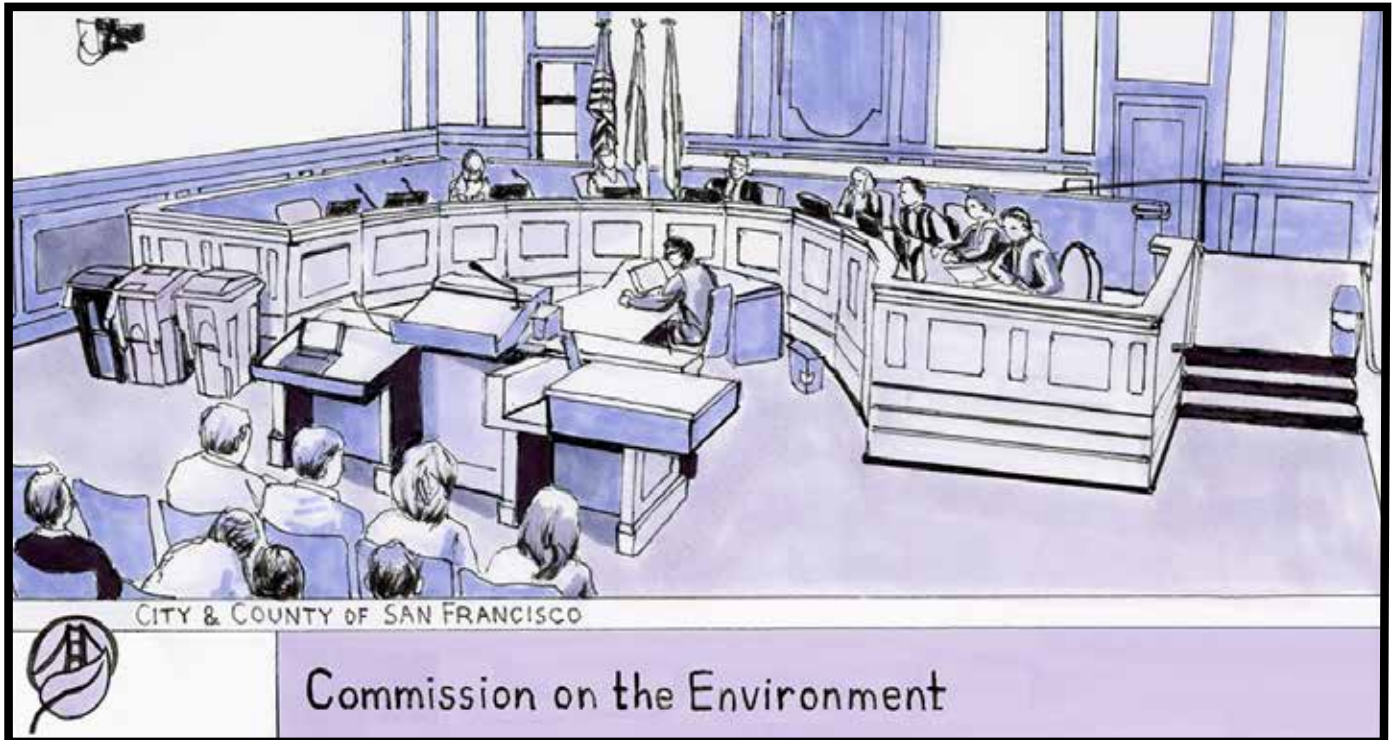
LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY *CONTINUED*

- Approved a resolution adopting the 2023 Reduced Risk Pesticide List for City Properties (Resolution File 2023-12-COE) on September 26.
- Approved a resolution authorizing an Environment Department zero waste grant (Resolution File 2023-13-COE) on October 30.
- Approved the 2021 Buy Green Report on December 4.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT GIFT SUMMARY

The following gifts to the Environment Department were reviewed by the Commission and reported to the Board of Supervisors in July 2023:

- From Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance, air travel, lodging, and meals for Environment Department staff to attend the CNCA Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington (\$1,874).
- From Association of Bay Area Governments, ground transport, lodging, and meals for Environment Department staff to attend the BayREN Equity Retreat in Pescadero, California (\$428).
- From C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, air travel, lodging, and meals for Environment Department staff to attend C40 World Mayors Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina (\$3,317).
- From Urban Sustainability Directors Network, air travel, lodging, and meals for Environment Department staff to attend a USDN conference in Portland, Oregon (\$850).
- From C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, air travel for Environment Department staff to attend the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal, Canada (\$730).
- From Rachael Miller, Green Can LLC, 100 microfiber-catching laundry balls to be distributed to San Francisco residents at no cost to prevent microfibers from entering the environment (\$4,200).
- From C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, air travel, lodging, and meals for Environment Department staff to attend the C40 Municipal Building Energy Efficiency Network Workshop in Buenos Aires, Argentina (\$2,230).



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Tyrone Jue
Director

London Breed
Mayor

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