

# **Marin Voice: Keep ag sustainable by making smart investment in North Bay's climate future**

*Andy Naja-Riese, Steve Schwartz*

Marin County just set a new record for the hottest Oct. 8 in history when San Rafael hit 108 degrees.

Extreme heat has devastating consequences, especially for Marin's growing older adult population and people who work outdoors. With each passing year, we experience how a changing climate can affect our lives – from prolonged heat waves to intensifying storms, sea level rise, more frequent flooding, and other threats. The longer we wait to act, the more severe the consequences will be.

That is why it is essential that Californians vote yes on Proposition 4 in the November election. It makes urgent investments in proven solutions to protect our communities, health and economy. It addresses threats to our iconic landscapes, coast and wildlife before the damage becomes too costly and unmanageable.

More than a quarter of Californians now live in areas that are classified as under very high or extreme fire threat. Even those who live in areas in which the threat is not as great feel the impacts – the fear of breathing toxic smoke, the reality of paying for homeowners' insurance that has become more expensive and more difficult to obtain. Remember when the skies turned an eerie, orange hue due to smoke from the North Complex Fire four years ago? The proven fire prevention and mitigation strategies in Proposition 4 will make us safer.

Higher temperatures will result in greater risk of wildfire and sea level rise in Marin. According to county's Climate Action Plan 2030, "by the end of the century, sea level is projected to rise 2.4 to 3.4 feet, and possibly as much as 10 feet." Marin's bayside communities like Bel Marin Keys, Santa Venetia, Strawberry and Kentfield, along with the coastal communities of Stinson Beach and Inverness, are particularly vulnerable.

The impacts would be far-reaching. Imagine what life would be like with flooding in downtown San Rafael, the Cove Shopping Center in Tiburon and Mill Valley Middle School. The effects of sea level rise would damage thousands of homes and businesses located near shorelines and creeks, disproportionately impacting Marin's communities of color in San Rafael's Canal neighborhood and Marin City. Proposition 4 would make funds available to tackle this problem now rather than put off action until the crisis worsens.

Fortunately, the Marin Climate Action Network – the driving force behind climate action here – has identified local solutions to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change,

while preparing our communities for its impacts. It would accelerate MarinCAN's solutions, from local food strategies to carbon sequestration to sea level rise resilience and more.

It would make unprecedented investments in climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture, local food system infrastructure and farmworker health and well-being. Agriculture is an essential part of Marin's economy and climate future. The Marin Carbon Project strengthens agricultural and climate resilience to climate change by implementing practices that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it to plant material and soil organic matter.

Proposition 4 accelerates agriculture as a climate solution on agricultural and rangelands in Marin County and beyond through \$385 million in sustainable agriculture like the Healthy Soils Program, Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Program and California Farmland Conservancy program. It would strengthen the resiliency of our local food supply chain by funding infrastructure for certified farmers markets like what's in store for the permanent, zero-waste farmers market and the Center for Food & Agriculture in development at the Marin Civic Center, as well as urban agriculture and farmer equipment sharing. More than \$635 million would also be invested to support farmworker health and well-being.

It shifts our state from a disaster response to a prevention approach, saving billions in future costs from wildfire damage, water shortages and insurance and utility bills for families. Proposition 4 is endorsed by a broad coalition of public safety leaders, wildfire prevention specialists, small businesses and faith-based organizations.

Proven, cost-effective prevention strategies will reduce disaster response spending, saving local governments millions annually. Our colleague, Jeff Creque of the Carbon Cycle Institute, has wisely asked, "What's the cost of us not taking action?"

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