

**#1. Issue:** Charter Review Commission should create an Office of Climate Policy with an independently elected full-time San Juan County Climate Commissioner.

**Proposal:** The San Juan County Charter establishes the Office of Climate and Environment headed by an independently elected Climate and Environment Commissioner.  
Motion passed 7:1

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**NEW SECTION: The San Juan County Office of Climate and Environment**

**Mission:** The mission of the San Juan County Office of Climate and Environment is to take urgent action to combat climate change and protect the environment.

**Scope:** The San Juan County Office of Climate and Environment shall serve as a branch of San Juan County government working in a proactive and collaborative manner to ensure San Juan County maintains an action-oriented focus on combating climate-altering activities, working across government to mitigate the impacts of climate change and prioritizing the protection of the environment, cultural and natural resources.

The Office of Climate and Environment, under the leadership of the Commissioner and guidance of the Advisory Council, shall work to advance climate action and adaptation by reducing San Juan County's carbon footprint, promoting renewable and sustainable energy independence, and proactively adapting to changing ecological and economic conditions while ensuring the protection and preservation of cultural and natural resources.

The Office of Climate and Environment shall include, but not be limited to, the following existing San Juan County functions in scope and staff:

- The Environmental Resources Division, including Clean Water Utility, Marine Programs, Solid Waste Management, Storm Water and Cultural Resources.
- The Community Development Code Enforcement of Code Chapters 18.35 Critical Areas and 18.50 Shoreline Program.

**Responsibilities and Authority of the Office:** The Office of Climate and Environment shall be responsible for protecting and preserving the extraordinary natural beauty and environment of San Juan County, Washington, while boldly addressing climate change. This work will include the identification of values, resources, and natural systems at risk and the prioritization and prevention of adverse impacts, reversal or remediation of detrimental actions, and the application of preservation strategies. In addition to the responsibilities of the existing San Juan County functions listed above, the Office of Climate and Environment authorities and responsibilities shall include:

- Develop the San Juan County Climate Action Plan and annual report to the residents of San Juan County on the state of the County's efforts to address climate change and protect the environment.
- Execute and enforce all ordinance and state statutes with respect to climate change, environmental protection and the mission of the Office of Climate and Environment. The Office may adopt rules and orders as permitted under applicable ordinances and statutes.
- Draft ordinances for SJC Council consideration that combats climate change and protects the environment.
- Review proposed ordinances for climate and environmental impact prior to San Juan County Council action.

- Through consultation with Coast Salish tribes, draft policies to ensure identification and protection of cultural resources in San Juan County.
- Develop new natural resource management practices that are shaped equally by western and indigenous science and knowledge utilizing management strategies built over millennia.
- Review and submit comments on County permits and the lead agency’s determinations of probable, significant, negative climate or environmental impact under applicable county and state law, including the State Environment Policy Act.
- Review and submit comments on County purchases, including fleet purchases, for determinations of probable, significant, negative climate or environmental impact and foster responsible purchasing through the State Environmental Preferred Purchasing.
- Review and submit comments on County projects for determinations of probable, significant, negative climate or environmental impact.
- Enter into agreements with other jurisdictions in order to advance the mission of the Office.
- Develop and sign contracts for mission-relevant services for San Juan County.
- Contribute to County plans that advance the mission of the Office.
- Cooperate with the San Juan County Department of Emergency Management during disaster or emergency situations as it relates to the mission of the Office.
- Influence, educate and advocate for the mission of the Office and participate in key discussions at the County, State and Federal level, including relevant legislative bodies, advisory boards and commissions.
- Provide education and outreach in concert with SJC community organizations to further the mission of the office.

15 total

**New Section: San Juan County Commissioner**

**Leadership:** The San Juan County Climate and Environment Commissioner shall serve as the non-partisan elected head of the San Juan County Office of Climate and Environment. The Commissioner shall administer and is responsible for all duties of and function of the Office.

In addition to managing and administering the Office, the Commissioner will play an active role in conceptualizing, drafting and advancing climate and environmental policies.

**Commissioner Qualifications:** In order to help ensure that a qualified person is elected, certain requirements must be met in order to qualify to run for, or hold, the position of San Juan County Climate and Environment Commissioner. The candidate:

- Shall have been a resident of San Juan County, Washington for three years and have been registered to vote in San Juan County, Washington 36 months, prior to election.
- Shall exhibit an education relevant to climate and environmental protection.
- Shall have a minimum of three years of applicable experience in management, administration, advocacy and protection of the climate and environment.

**New Section: San Juan County Climate and Environment Advisory Council**

The San Juan County (SJC) Council shall appoint the SJC Climate and Environment Advisory Committee to serve as a residents advisory committee to the Commissioner and the Office on issues relevant to the mission of the Office. This body shall include seven members of the San Juan County community of which at least four are indigenous community, members representing “local green jobs,” members of conservation organizations, and SJC youth and at least one is a professional home builder.

**Charter Section 5.10 is Amended to read as follows:**

Except as provided in this Charter, nominating primaries and elections of the Climate and Environment Commissioner, County Sheriff, County Treasurer, County Clerk, County Auditor and County Assessor shall be conducted in accordance with general law governing the election of non-partisan County offices. Except as provided in the Charter, nominating primaries and election of the Legislative Body shall be conducted in accordance with general law governing the election of non-partisan County officers. The election of the Prosecuting Attorney shall be as provided by state law.

**Employee assumptions:** No current County employees will face job loss, without cause, as a result of department reorganization. Any changes to positions, not within this Amendment or already planned prior to the adoption of the Amendment, will not occur within the first year of the Office's operation. Talent anticipated for unmet need or expanded roles will be sourced in-County, to the extent possible and in accordance with the SJC Collective Bargaining Agreement for covered employees.

**Findings:**

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I. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), representing over 2,500 climate scientists and 30 years of research, has concluded that global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions of human activities is the most pressing challenge facing the world today.

II. Cooperating governments throughout the world have adopted emission reduction targets and programs to keep global warming below the 2°C increase, in an effort to reduce catastrophic impacts of climate change and ultimately sustain all life on Earth.

III. All of the Washington State Charter Counties have some form of a Climate Action Program or major climate and natural resource protection plans except San Juan County.

1. Clark County's program is in their Department of Environment & Sustainability.
2. Snohomish County's program is in the Conservation and Natural Resources Department as an Office of Energy and Sustainability.
3. Pierce County has an Office of Sustainability and passed legislation in 2016 that identifies lead activities for each department in the administration. The City of Tacoma has an Office of Sustainability.
4. Clallam County has a program within its' Department of Community Development,
5. King County's Climate program includes not only greenhouse gas reductions, but land conservation and food sustainability.
6. Whatcom County has Climate Action Plan that goes back to 2007 and the City of Bellingham has programs and plans in its Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

IV. According to the Climate Impact Group at University of WA (September 2019).

1. Spring snowpack declined by 30% on average from 1955 to 2016.

2. WA glaciers are shrinking and Glaciers in North Cascades decreased 56% between 1900 and 2009.
3. Sea Level rise is affecting WA's Coast. At Friday Harbor the sea rose over 4 inches between 1934 and 2018. Seattle experienced a rise of 9.7 inches between 1899 and 2018.
4. WA coastal waters are warming and acidifying-sea surface temperature off the WA coast increased .9 to 1.8 F from 1990 to 2012.
5. Peak streamflow is occurring earlier. Spring peak streamflow has shifted up to 20 days earlier from 1948 to 2002 in most snow-dominated water sheds in Puget Sound.

**V. According to The Islands Climate Resilience Report, Madrona Institute (November 2017):**

1. Climate change is expected to increase fire activity in Puget Sound region due to warmer air temperatures and drier condition. Across the Pacific Northwest, the area burned is projected to double by 2040 relative to 1916-2006. The San Juan Islands will likely be affected by smoke even when the wildfires themselves are on the mainland.
2. By 2100, coastal bluffs in San Juan County may erode by approximately 100 to 155 feet in areas with high exposure to wind and waves, and 75 to 115 feet in areas with less exposure (relative to 2000) under moderate and high emissions scenarios respectively.
3. Many salmonids, including coho, chinook and steelhead trout, are with a high degree of confidence rated as being moderately to highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Salmonids are likely to experience reduced summer rearing habitat due to lower water flows and fewer vernal pools, as well as increased temperatures.
4. Wild and cultivated shellfish in the nearshore environments around San Juan Islands will face significant pressure from ocean acidification, which will inhibit their growth. Increase runoff from more intense winter precipitation, coastal erosion, and warmer temperatures will decrease water quality, affecting growth and survival.

**VI. Sea Doc Society reported only 75 Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) remain in the wild. The population is facing extinction. Three big challenges for SRKW-- food source, the salmon population has plummeted in Salish Sea, the critical king salmon; shipping traffic and boat noise are a serious problem. Orcas communicate and track food through sound; humans releasing contaminants into the water persist in the whales after they have died and the toxins weaken SRKW immune systems. Climate change is a significant additional stressor on salmon and resident orcas populations as a result.**

**VII. Washington State requires each county and city to have a solid waste recovery plan for contamination reduction and an outreach plan that addresses contamination of materials accepted as part of the recycling program. San Juan County would see noticeable savings by keeping organic waste out of the landfill bound waste stream, which comprises 20-30% of the waste leaving on the ferry, according to estimates. San Juan County residents want to reduce contamination from the waste stream and most residents want to participate in a viable reduction program. waste disposed of in landfills ultimately result in methane production. Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas, second only to CO2 in creating climate change and reduction of methane emissions must be a priority to reduce climate impacts and temperature changes.**

**VIII. Washington State has established a deadline of 2045 for achieving zero carbon usage.**

1. Transportation and heating account for about 45% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Transportation and heating are the largest sources of energy usage for a average household in San Juan County, with 53% of residential energy used for driving and 26% used for heating.

3. San Juan County is the largest individual employer in the Islands and also a significant source of carbon emissions.

4. San Juan County has a goal of net zero emissions for its governmental operations by 2030.

5. SJ County fleet includes 350 pieces of equipment including standardized vehicles, non-law enforcement boats, various off-road vehicles (graders, loaders, pavers etc.) and rentals. Six vehicles are hybrid-electric/fully electric of the roughly 150 traditional road vehicles, only 4% .

6. Consumer Reports studies shows that fuel savings alone can be \$4,700 or more over the first seven years of purchasing an electric vehicle. Typical total ownership savings over the life of most electric vehicles ranges from \$6,000 to \$10,000 Consumer Reports found for vehicles under \$50,000.

XI. Residents of the San Juan Islands, as well as tourist come from all over the world to hike, kayak, fish, and view our wildlife. Tourism is the number one industry in San Juan County. To create a sustainable and resilient San Juan County, climate and environmental protection must become priorities.

X. San Juan County Council Resolution No. 08-2008 established an initial benchmark of local climate change response and San Juan County Council Resolution No. 20-2020 updated that earlier resolution. While No. 08-2008 and No. 20-2020 layout meaningful goals, few climate actions have been implemented to date.

XI. The consolidation of existing dedicated staff under an independent elected Office of Climate and Environment will allow the bold actions desired by the population of San Juan County to be successfully advanced.

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**#2 Issue:** Is the Charter and current structure of the Local Government able to serve our County effectively in the next decade (2021-2030 in line with the UN Agenda 2030 and the Global Sustainable Development Goals?

**Proposal:** Incorporated issue in #1 issue above.

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**#3 Issue:** A resilience officer with specific powers whose input is developed through community councils whose jurisdiction is developed by watershed or relevant biological/ecological distinctions sufficient to comply with “consistency” requirements of GMA.

**Proposal:** Incorporated issue in #1 issue above.

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**#4 Issue:** Buildout Analysis

**Proposal:** Recommendation for San Juan County Council forthcoming

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**#5 Issue:** Green Waste

**Proposal:** Incorporated issue in #1 issue above.

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