

# Local Government Energy Efficiency

## Best Practices

### CLIMATE PLANS

#### Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

16 Cities, 2 Counties participated in Collaborative  
Population: 900,000 (2008)

#### SUMMARY

While large metropolitan cities have been working on climate change mitigation projects for years, many of California's smaller jurisdictions are in much earlier stages of grappling with greenhouse gas emissions.

Many of these cities and counties lack the necessary staff and funds to devote to greenhouse gas reduction projects, and as a result, the vast majority of AMBAG's 21 jurisdictions had not quantified their baseline GHG emissions as of 2009.

Recognizing the need for more support with local climate change efforts, AMBAG designed a program that would yield the following results:

- completion of local government operations inventories in 100% of AMBAG jurisdictions at **NO COST** to the municipal governments;
- capacity-building for jurisdictional staff;
- community capacity-building in the field of climate change mitigation; and
- standardized greenhouse gas inventories for regional comparability.

## Regional Inventory Collaborative



#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Collaborative is a Partnership between:

- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
- Local Jurisdictions
- Graduate Students of Monterey Institute of International Studies and Panetta Institute of California State University Monterey Bay
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company

AMBAG manages the program, which it developed with ICLEI, and is responsible for quality control and public relations.

ICLEI provides the tools and training to the students and jurisdictional staff. The software was developed by ICLEI and is administered to all the stakeholders.

The local jurisdictions are responsible for having their staff work with assigned interns to complete inventories for the jurisdiction and learn how to track future emissions.

The student interns are responsible for creating complete inventories with the local jurisdictional staff and mastering the educational tools and standards in order to build their career skills.

PG&E provides funding for the program through the AMBAG Energy Watch Partnership and provides essential energy data for the inventories.

# Regional Inventory Collaborative

## LESSONS LEARNED

- The student interview process was a key element to success in order to match the personality and experience level of interns with each jurisdiction's needs.
- Each jurisdiction was unique and the data each intern was able to collect came in different formats, sometimes not easily decipherable. Often the data required staff or interns to break it down into a more acceptable format for the software.
- The interns who worked with the smaller jurisdictions helped the interns who worked with the larger jurisdictions to complete the projects within the timeline given (one semester).
- Templates for some of the data (vehicle fleets, refrigerants and fire suppression chemicals) would help to standardize data collection.
- Weekly quality control checks helped with project management and kept deliverables within the anticipated timeframe.
- Be thorough, but pragmatic. There is a marginal-cost/marginal-benefit to seeking minute data (e.g., fire extinguisher discharge amounts from periodic testing); time must be allocated first and foremost to the most policy-relevant data sets (e.g., vehicle fleet and energy usage).

## THE REST OF THE STORY

AMBAG and PG&E have partnered since 2006 to deliver the AMBAG Energy Watch Program, a program of energy efficiency in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties. The nearly \$144,000 cost of the first phase of the Regional Inventory Collaborative (RIC) was covered by the AMBAG Energy Watch Program.

The goals of AMBAG Energy Watch regarding local government leadership in energy efficiency and climate protection are:

- By 2010, 100% of AMBAG governments will have completed the local government operations protocol.
- By 2011, 100% of AMBAG governments will have completed the Communities Protocol (assuming CARB has completed the protocol).
- By 2012, 100% of AMBAG governments will have participated in training provided by AMBAG Energy Watch on preparing a Climate Action Plan and have completed a first draft at a minimum.

The AMBAG Energy Watch Regional Inventory Collaborative was conceived to address these goals, for



the 18 participating local governments that varied in size from less than 300 residents to over 428,000.

In the first phase of the RIC, AMBAG contracted with ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability to design a training series for local government staff that would help them to produce local government operations emissions inventories for their jurisdictions. ICLEI also provided tools to organize the data and calculate the associated emissions,  [> more...](#)

## Regional Inventory Collaborative

...continued from page 2 > and worked with Energy Watch staff to develop a standardized report template.

A key element in meeting the program's goals was partnering with the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS). AMBAG's partnership with MIIS yielded 13 students, as well as 3 graduate students from the Panetta Institute at CSU Monterey Bay that assisted jurisdictional staff in completing their local government greenhouse gas inventories in one semester.

AMBAG worked closely with the chairman of the MBA program at MIIS to structure an independent study course that allowed students to earn academic credit for helping to produce the inventories. AMBAG contacted the school's financial aid department to recruit students who were eligible for federal work study funding as part of their financial aid packages. AMBAG also worked with other students in the region interested in gaining the experience without pay or credit.

By pairing an intern with each jurisdiction throughout the semester-long training process, Energy Watch was able to fulfill the goal of building capacity within the local community while solving the problem of limited staff time. All 18 inventories were completed in a very short time, and many of the interns leveraged their experience to obtain green jobs and federal internships in the climate change field.

ICLEI provided training courses at key points in the process. During the first phase of the project, interns worked with jurisdictional staff to collect all of the raw data relevant to the GHG inventory.

The second phase required conditioning the data, where it was sorted into a usable format for input into the software.

During the third phase, the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were calculated from the conditioned data, using ICLEI's Clean Air and Climate Protection (CACP) software.

### GAINING POLITICAL SUPPORT

City council members and county supervisors were involved in the decision to conduct the GHG inventories via their roles on AMBAG's board of directors.

One of the first steps AMBAG took to begin the program was to engage the jurisdictions by having them agree to complete the protocol.

AMBAG set up initial one-on-one meetings with city managers or senior county staff and senior Energy Watch staff to obtain commitment to participate in the process.

AMBAG and the city managers/senior county staff members identified the jurisdictional staff person(s) to attend the training and work with the intern.

During introductory meetings with the staff person(s), AMBAG learned that the ability to commit time varied greatly by jurisdiction. AMBAG was able to pair the appropriate intern, based on capability, time availability and interest, with the needs of each jurisdiction.

The findings were then entered into a narrative report template, provided by ICLEI and edited by AMBAG Energy Watch staff, which was provided to each jurisdiction.

As part two of its three-part effort, AMBAG Energy Watch is working with some of the same interns to assist 20 jurisdictions to complete their community-scale inventory. Planning staff from all jurisdictions will receive training from ICLEI, while Energy Watch staff will prepare the final GHG inventory reports.

Plans are currently in the works for the third phase of the RIC, which will again utilize graduate level interns from MIIS to work alongside jurisdictional staff to produce first-draft climate action plans for all participating jurisdictions.

### LEARN MORE

**Charlie Buck** managed the program and can be reached at [CBuck@ambag.org](mailto:CBuck@ambag.org).

# Local Government BEST PRACTICES

## SIMILAR PROGRAMS

■ The **Student Residential Energy Efficiency Team (StREET)** Pilot Program is a collaboration between the City of San Diego, University of San Diego, and SDG&E. USD student volunteers are trained on residential energy programs, how to conduct residential energy evaluations, and how to engage diverse communities and cultures.

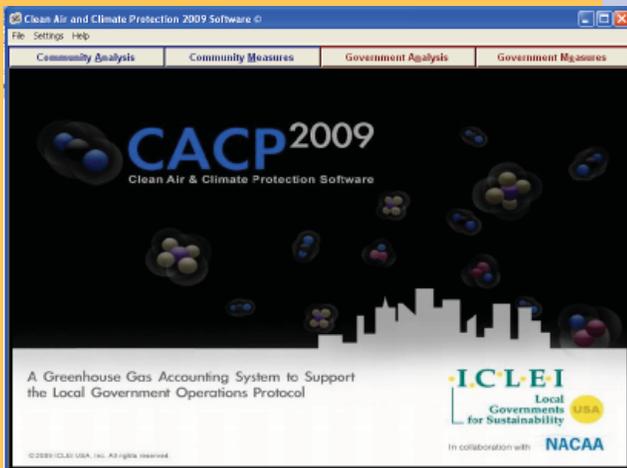
Email Josh Brock at: [JBrock@sandiego.gov](mailto:JBrock@sandiego.gov)

■ The **East Bay Green Academy** has brought together Alameda & Contra Costa County's workforce training providers and educational institutions to align their green tech training programs, resources, and curriculum to meet employer demand.

[www.oaklandpartnership.com/greenacademy](http://www.oaklandpartnership.com/greenacademy)

■ The **City of Long Beach** has had a Green Internship program since 2009, where college credit is earned through projects that support Long Beach's sustainability program.

[www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/sustainability/green\\_internships/](http://www.longbeach.gov/citymanager/sustainability/green_internships/)



For more information about this case study:  
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Funded by California utility ratepayers and administered by California's investor owned utilities under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

## Climate Plans

*“Because of my internship with AMBAG, I was able to gain the skill set necessary to be hired by the US EPA in Washington, D.C. It really gave me an edge over other candidates being considered for the position.”*

- Sarah Wendel, International Environment Policy graduate student at the Monterey Institute of International Studies

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

■ **ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability** ([www.californiaseec.org](http://www.californiaseec.org)) offers a suite of resources to aid local governments in implementing energy efficiency measures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

■ **The Institute for Local Government's California Climate Action Network** ([www.ca-ilg.org/climatechange](http://www.ca-ilg.org/climatechange)) provides resources, information, and recognition to assist local agencies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving energy.

■ **The Local Government Commission** ([www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)) provides many free resources to assist local governments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy use including newsletters and publications, fact sheets, model projects, and articles.

■ Check with your local colleges and universities to find out about earning college credit for intern programs and/or hiring work study students.