RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

OF THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Resolution Number 25–069

Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan and CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds EIR

Record Number LRP-2019-15593

RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MAKE THE REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATION OF EIR AND ADOPT STATEMENTS OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission makes all the following findings:

Required Findings of Approval

CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

1. FINDING: **CEQA EIR -** The County of Humboldt has completed an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with CEQA.

EVIDENCE: a) CEQA requires preparation of an EIR if there is substantial evidence in light of the whole record that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

b) A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was filed with the State Clearinghouse on August 30, 2024, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 to inform interested parties of the County's determination that an EIR would be required for the project, solicit input about the desired content and scope of the Draft EIR (DEIR), announce the date and time of a public scoping meeting, and provide information on where documents about the project were available for review and where comments could be sent on the project. The NOP was posted at the County Recorder's office; uploaded to the County website; sent to interested parties; and circulated through the State Clearinghouse (SCH#2024081319). The NOP was circulated for a period of 30 days, ending on September 30, 2024.

c) Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15083, prior to completing the DEIR, the County of Humboldt held a hybrid scoping meeting on September 17, 2024, at the Humboldt County Agricultural Center and on Zoom to solicit input from the regulatory agencies

and public. Appendix A of the DEIR includes the NOP, written comments in response to the NOP, and a summary of the comments received during the scoping meeting.

d) The DEIR for the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP) and CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds (LRP-2019-15593) was prepared in accordance with CEQA and circulated for public review from February 18, 2025, to April 5, 2025 (SCH#:2024081319), a 45-day review period, in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105; a Notice of Availability of the DEIR was posted at the County Recorder's office; uploaded to the County website; sent to interested parties; and published in the Times Standard on February 18, 2025.

e) The project evaluated by the DEIR is the RCAP and quantitative CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds of Significance. While there is no direct development with approval of the plan itself, development could occur with future projects to implement the RCAP. Some projects promoted by the RCAP include new electricity infrastructure, renewable energy projects, renewable fuel production, organic waste processing, and recycled water facilities. The potential impacts that can be identified associated with these projects have been identified and mitigation measures adopted.

f) EIR - SUMMARY OF IMPACTS All environmental issue areas under CEQA were analyzed for implementation of the RCAP and CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds in the EIR. Potential impacts that were found not to be significant includes impacts related to Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Mineral Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, Public Services, Recreation, Wildfire, GHG Emissions, Energy, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, Transportation, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, Noise, and Utilities and Service Systems. Potential impacts that could be mitigated to less than significant includes impacts related to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Noise.

There are 10 identified significant and unavoidable impacts in the DEIR related to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources,

Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, Noise, and Utilities and Service Systems even with mitigation; and there are six identified potentially significant impacts that can be reduced to a level of less than significant with mitigation related to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Noise.

g) All project changes required to avoid significant effects on the environment will be incorporated into future RCAP implementation projects. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan has been prepared in accordance with Humboldt County regulations and is designed to ensure compliance during project implementation and is recommended to be adopted in conjunction with project approval.

h) Evidence that has been received and considered includes: the RCAP, RCAP Appendix A *Climate Regulatory Context*, RCAP Appendix B *GHG Inventory, Forecast, and Targets Report*, RCAP Appendix C *Substantial Evidence Report*, the *CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds and Guidance Report,* technical studies/reports that have been peer reviewed and reflect the County's independent judgment and the FEIR, and information and testimony presented during public hearings before the Planning Commission. These documents are on file in the Planning and Building Department (LRP-2019-15593) and are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

i) FINAL EIR -- RESPONSES TO COMMENTS. The County received five comments from 16 agencies, organizations, and individuals on the DEIR, and prepared a Final EIR (FEIR). The FEIR considered the comments received during the public review period for the DEIR and provided appropriate responses. The FEIR was released to the public, uploaded on the County's website and sent to all commentor's on October 3, 2025. The FEIR was presented to the Planning Commission on October 16, 2025, for deliberation.

In order to better address repetitive comments that were received during the comment period, two Master Responses were prepared to address to main comments. The Master Responses allow a more complete response to the comments

made rather than individually responding to all comments.

j) The Humboldt County Planning and Building Department, located at 3015 H Street, Eureka, CA 95501 is the custodian of documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision to certify the EIR is based.

2. FINDING: The Final EIR reflects the County of Humboldt's independent judgment and analysis.

EVIDENCE: a) The EIR (DEIR/FEIR) was prepared by Rincon Consultant's and the Humboldt County Long-Range Planning Division. The DEIR was prepared by Rincon Consultant's under contract to the County of Humboldt, and the FEIR was prepared by the Long-Range Planning Division. The RCAP and CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds and Guidance Report documents were prepared by Rincon Consultant's in collaboration with RCAP partners and were finalized by the Long-Range Planning Division.

b) The Planning Commission considered the information presented in the record relative to the FEIR and considered the public comment on the FEIR prior to rendering its decision. The Planning Commission considered all public comments, including those made by subject manner experts. Based on the evidence in the public record, the Planning Commission finds that the FEIR adequately addresses all potential environmental impacts and presents adequate feasible mitigation to reduce impacts to a less than significant level where possible. For those impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level less than significant, all feasible mitigation has been presented and considered.

3. FINDING: RECIRCULATION OF THE DEIR IS NOT REQUIRED. No new information was included in the FEIR as part of responding to the comments on the DEIR. The only minor changes to the DEIR were to update the definition for urban and rural areas based on comments received.

EVIDENCE: a) The FEIR does not present any new information as can be seen in the FEIR.

b) Changes to the DEIR as reflected in the FEIR were suggested by the public commenters requesting clarification.

4. **FINDING:** REVISED URBAN VS RURAL. Revisions have been made to DEIR to reflect the definition for urban vs rural areas, in line with the US Census Bureau.

EVIDENCE: a) The definition for urban areas was updated to be in line with the US Census Bureau's definition and requirements for urban areas.

b) The definition for rural areas was updated to be more clear about areas that are considered rural and not urban.

5. **FINDING:** EIR - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT – NO MITIGATION REQUIRED (specific resource impact categories are shown in parentheses) The following impacts have been found to be less than significant, and mitigation is not required to reduce future RCAP-related project impacts: Agricultural and Forestry Resources (forest land conversion), Air Quality (air quality plans and odors), Biological Resources (protection policies and conservation plans), Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources (human remains disturbance), Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Noise (airport noise), Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems (water supply, wastewater treatment, and solid waste), and Wildfire.

EVIDENCE: a) <u>Agricultural and Forestry Resources:</u> The RCAP includes measures that promote the conservation of forest land and timberland. Additionally, infrastructure facilitated by the RCAP would not be anticipated to result in the conversion of forest land nor conflict with existing zoning for forestry or timberland use.

b) <u>Air Quality:</u> The RCAP includes measures that would reduce air pollutant emissions from the energy and transportation sectors and would be consistent with applicable air quality plans. Projects under the RCAP would not create objectionable odors that could adversely affect a substantial number of people.

c) <u>Biological Resources:</u> Infrastructure facilitated by the RCAP

would be required to conform with applicable local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources. The RCAP would not conflict with an adopted or approved local, regional, federal, or State habitat conservation plan. Any future RCAP related infrastructure projects occurring within an adopted or approved local, regional, federal, or State habitat conservation plan would be required to comply with the applicable plan's requirements.

d) Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources: The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground-disturbing activities. Ground disturbance associated with development carried out under the RCAP may disturb or damage known or unknown human remains. This impact would be less than significant with adherence to existing regulations for inadvertent discover protocol.

e) Energy: The RCAP would implement GHG reduction strategies that would promote greater overall energy efficiency. Wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy would not occur. The RCAP would be consistent with applicable energy efficiency and renewable energy goals and regulations, including relevant provisions of California Energy Code Title 24 and CALGreen.

f) Geology and Soils: Future RCAP-related projects would be required to comply with California Building Code (CBC) and be required to implement appropriate Best Management Practices and comply with the Humboldt LID Stormwater Manual and the Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ of the State Water Resources Control Board, as applicable, as well as general plan policies, zoning regulations, and design and construction standards.

g) Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Implementation of the RCAP would not generate GHG emissions in a manner that would have a significant impact on the environment. The RCAP would support applicable plans, policies, and regulations intended to reduce emissions of GHGs.

h) Hazards and Hazardous Materials: Future RCAP projects would be required to comply with all local, State, and federal regulations regarding hazards and hazardous materials.

Furthermore, the RCAP would not include future projects and land uses that would interfere with emergency response and evacuation plans during operation.

i) Hydrology and Water Quality: All projects facilitated by the RCAP would be required to comply with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations to ensure that potential hydrology and water quality impacts of construction or operation of future projects facilitated by the RCAP would be less than significant. Additionally, the RCAP includes Measure WW-2 that seeks to decrease community water use by promoting water efficiency retrofits, sustainable landscaping, efficient landscaping irrigation, and increased recycled water production and use. As such, the RCAP is anticipated to reduce the use of water, including groundwater supplies.

j) Land Use and Planning: Implementation of the RCAP would not physically divide an established community. No impacts would occur. The RCAP would be consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

k) Mineral Resources: The RCAP is a policy document to reduce GHG emissions in Humboldt and would not result in extraction or use of mineral resources. In addition, goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the general plan facilitate the continued operation of local mining sites and protection of mineral resource areas from incompatible land uses and, thus, prevent loss of availability of known and locally important mineral resources.

l) Noise: Project and infrastructure facilitated by the RCAP may experience increased noise levels from nearby airports. Airports in the plan area have generally minor noise contours; in addition, construction contractors and maintenance employers would be required to comply with Cal OSHA noise regulations. Construction workers and maintenance employees would not be exposed to excessive noise levels from aircraft noise.

m) Population and Housing: Implementation of the RCAP would not result in substantial unplanned population growth in Humboldt or the displacement of people or housing.

n) Public Services: The RCAP would not result in new habitable development requiring the provision or expansion of public services. Rather, the RCAP would promote improvements and infrastructure such as renewable energy, renewable fuel production, organic waste processing, recycled water, and active transportation and public transit infrastructure. There are also no aspects of the RCAP that would significantly impact the ability of the County, or other local services providers to continue to provide public services in Humboldt.

o) Recreation: The RCAP would not result in new habitable or recreational development requiring the provision or expansion of parks or other recreational facilities. Implementation of the RCAP, including associated improvements or subsequent infrastructure to occur as a result of the plan, would not be expected to significantly increase the use of neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities, create new recreational facilities, nor require the construction or expansion of existing recreational facilities.

p) Transportation: Implementation of the RCAP would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; would result in reduced VMT and, therefore, would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b); would not substantially increase hazards because of a geometric design feature or incompatible uses; and would not result in inadequate emergency access.

q) Utilities and Service Systems: Implementation of the plan would not be anticipated to substantially increase population in Humboldt or the demand for water services during normal, dry, and multiple dry years, and would result in an overall reduction in water demand; would not be anticipated to substantially increase wastewater treatment demand such that the respective wastewater treatment providers would not have sufficient capacity to serve the plan's projected demand in addition to the providers' existing commitments; and would not be anticipated to substantially increase solid waste generation such that state or local standards or capacity of local infrastructure would be exceeded or otherwise impact the

attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Additionally, there is no element of the plan that would result in noncompliance with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

r) Wildfire: Future RCAP-related facilities occurring in wildfire hazard areas would be required to implement BMPs, such as defensible space and vegetation clearance zones, in compliance with the respective local jurisdiction's general plan policies, zoning regulations, fire code regulations, design and construction standards, and the CBC Wildland-Urban Interface Building Standards, as well as the adopted Fire Safe Regulations for any
development specifically to occur within the SRA. In addition, the RCAP contains Measures T-10 and CS-3, which include actions to sustainably manage forest biomass such as through understory clearing, that would reduce the risk of wildfire within Humboldt's forested areas.

6. FINDING: EIR - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS MITIGATED TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT (specific resource impact categories are shown in parentheses) The EIR identified potentially significant impacts to Aesthetics (light and glare), Air Quality (toxic air contaminate (TAC) emissions during construction), Biological Resources (riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands), Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources (archaeological and tribal cultural resources), and Noise (groundborne vibration), which could result from future RCAP-related projects. Mitigation Measures have been required to ensure potential impacts are limited to a less than significant level.

EVIDENCE: a) Aesthetics: Potentially significant impacts caused by light and glare have been mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of a mitigation measure (AES-3) that requires implementation of light and glare reduction design measures.

b) Air Quality: Potentially significant impacts caused by TAC emissions during construction have been mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of a mitigation measure (AQ-3) that requires the developer conduct a construction health risk assessment and implement diesel particulate matter emissions reductions.

c) Biological Resources: Potentially significant impacts to riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, and protected wetlands have been mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of a mitigation measures (BIO-5, BIO-6, and BIO-7) that require the preparation of aquatic environmental documentation prior to project approval, the implementation of aquatic environment avoidance and minimization measures, and compensation for loss of aquatic environments.

d) Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources: Two potentially significant impacts to archaeological and tribal cultural resources have been mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of mitigation measures (CR-2 and CR-3) that require the preparation of an archaeological resources assessment prior to project approval and implementation of mitigation prior to and during construction, and the suspension of work around tribal cultural resources identified during construction.

e) Noise: Potentially significant impacts from the generation of groundborne vibration during construction have been mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of mitigation measure (NOI-3) that requires the preparation and Implementation of a construction vibration control plan

7. FINDING: EIR- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS NOT MITIGATED TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT The proposed implementation of the RCAP and GHG Emissions Thresholds would result in significant and unavoidable impacts that would not be mitigated to a less than significant level even with incorporation of mitigation measures, as further described in the evidence below. There are specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations which make infeasible mitigating these impacts to a less than significant level. (15091(a)(3).)

EVIDENCE: a) The DEIR found three project impacts to aesthetic resources that would be significant and unavoidable even with mitigation.

Impact AES-1. Large-scale renewable energy and renewable fuel production projects facilitated by the RCAP could have an adverse effect on scenic vistas within Humboldt. Even with

mitigation the siting and design of future projects facilitated by the RCAP is unknown so the potential impact must be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AES-2. Projects facilitated by the RCAP could have an adverse effect on scenic routes within Humboldt. Because the siting and design of future projects facilitated by the RCAP is unknown at this time, the feasibility and effectiveness of required mitigation measures is unknown, and impacts remain significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

Impact AES-3. Large-scale renewable energy and renewable fuel production projects facilitated by the RCAP could have an adverse effect on public views within Humboldt. The siting and design of future development facilitated by the RCAP is unknown at this time, even with mitigation measures the impacts must be considered significant and unavoidable.

b) The DEIR found one project impact to air quality resources that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AQ-2. Future projects implementing the RCAP would result in generation of air pollutants during, which could affect local air quality even with mitigation. Since project-level details and locations are unknown at this stage of planning, mitigation measures may not be feasible or effective for all future RCAP projects, and impacts must be considered significant and unavoidable.

c) The DEIR found two project impacts to biological resources that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact BIO-1. Infrastructure facilitated by the RCAP could result in direct or indirect impacts to special-status species or their associated habitats including impacts to migratory bird nest sites. Significant indirect impacts on special-status species would occur due to the loss of common, nonsensitive habitat. With the development facilitated by RCAP measures and actions, habitat and biological resources to support special-status species could be reduced.

Impact BIO-3 Construction impacts near wildlife movement

corridors and wildlife nursery sites may not be feasibly reduced, and impacts remain significant and unavoidable.

d) The DEIR found one project impact to agriculture and forestry resources that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact AG-1. Infrastructure facilitated by the RCAP has the potential to convert Farmland to non-agricultural use and conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. Mitigation measures would not ensure that the conversion of Farmland could be avoided. As such, impacts remain significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

e) The DEIR found one project impact to cultural resources that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact CR-1. Existing and eligible historical resources could still be materially impaired by future development that would be carried out under the proposed plan. While Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation would reduce impacts to the greatest extent feasible in cases where compliance with the standards or avoidance is not possible, legal precedent has established that such a measure cannot mitigate impacts to a level of less than significant, because the loss of historical fabric cannot be readily compensated for by commemorative mitigation. Therefore, RCAP construction impacts related to historical resources would be significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

f) The DEIR found one project impact to noise that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact NOI-1. Even with application of Mitigation Measures NOI-1, construction noise from projects and infrastructure under the RCAP may not be able to be reduced below applicable FTA, or County thresholds, and impacts remain significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

Due to a lack of specific details and location information for future RCAP projects that involve new or expanded transit services, transit noise could impact nearby noise sensitive receptors and exceed acceptable standards. Therefore,

operational noise impacts related to transit projects remain significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

g) The DEIR found one project impact to utilities and service systems that would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact UTL-1. The relocation or construction of new or expanded water supply, wastewater, and/or electric power infrastructure and facilities within Humboldt, which would involve ground disturbing activities that could result in significant environmental effects. Without specific plans or projects for water, wastewater, and/or electric power infrastructure and facilities, it cannot be concluded with certainty that the application of mitigation measures would fully reduce all impacts associated with construction or expansion of existing infrastructure to a less than significant level. Therefore, the RCAP construction and operation impacts related to water, wastewater, and/or electrical power infrastructure and facilities remain significant and unavoidable with mitigation.

8. FINDING: TRIBAL CONSULTATION – AB 52 Consultation occurred for the project.

EVIDENCE: a) On September 5, 2024, the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, Big Lagoon Rancheria, Blue Lake Rancheria, Cher-Ae-Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria, Elk Valley Rancheria, Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria, Grindstone Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Melochundum Band of Tolowa Indians, Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People, Quartz Valley Indian Community, Round Valley Reservation/Covelo Indian Community, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo, Shasta Indian Nation, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Tsnungwe Council, Wiyot Tribe, and Yurok Tribe were offered AB 52 consultation.

b) Representatives of the Shasta Indian Nation, Quartz Valley Indian Community and Karuk Tribe responded that no further consultation was desired or that they did not have the capacity to review the project.

c) No other Tribes responded to the offer of AB 52 consultation.

9. FINDING: EIR - CEQA ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT In compliance with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6, the DEIR considered three alternatives to the proposed ordinance. The EIR considered the alternatives described below which are more fully described in the DEIR. There are specific economic, legal, social, technological or other considerations which make infeasible the environmentally superior project alternative identified in the EIR for reasons discussed below. However, Alternative 2 is being recommended for implementation as part of the RCAP.

EVIDENCE: a) Alternative No. 1: No Project Alternative.

The No Project Alternative assumes that no adoption or implementation of the RCAP or CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds would occur.

The No Project Alternative would not meet any of the basic project objectives listed below:

- Satisfy Policy AQ-P9 and Implementation Measure AQ-IM3 of the Air Quality Element in the General Plan
- Establish a coalition between jurisdictions and key organizations to guide a regional approach to climate-related challenges
- Identify strategies, measures, actions, and tracking mechanisms to serve as a qualified GHG reduction plan and provide a foundation for sustainable development efforts in the region
- Reduce communitywide GHG emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (a maximum total annual emissions of 1,241,589 MT of CO2e) in line with County and State targets
- Reduce communitywide GHG emissions to net neutral by 2045, with at least 85 percent being via GHG emissions reductions, in line with County and State targets
- Demonstrate a level of GHG emissions below which the County would have less-than cumulatively-considerable GHG impacts for future environmental planning reviews and provide CEQA streamlining for projects via the Humboldt Regional CEQA GHG Checklist
- Strengthen the growing regional green economy
- Improve Humboldt air quality and, thus, public health

Alternative 1 would not achieve the objectives of the General Plan to develop a multi-jurisdictional Climate Action Plan that is in line with state legislation and mitigates the General Plan 2017 update.

b) Alternative No. 2 Sustainable Communities.

The Sustainable Communities Alternative builds upon the RCAP's focus on infill development patterns and developing regional mobility hubs and would modify RCAP measures T-3 to encourage mixed-use development in infill priority areas and RCAP Measure T-4 to commit the local jurisdictions to initiate the planning and development of Mobility Hub projects by 2027. Alternative 2 would further reduce VMT and associated GHG emissions, air pollutant emissions, and transportation energy use in Humboldt in comparison to the proposed plan. While most Alternative 2 impacts are similar in significance to the proposed plan, greater benefits related to air quality, energy use, GHG emissions, and transportation would occur. Alternative 2 would also meet all of the plan objectives and would meet both the State 2030 and 2045 emission reduction goals.

While Alternative 2 was not found to be the environmentally superior alternative in the DEIR, much of this work is already being done by the partners of the RCAP. Alternative 2 is being recommended for implementation as part of the RCAP.

c) Alternative No. 3 Enhanced Carbon Sequestration.

The Enhanced Carbon Sequestration Alternative would revise RCAP Measures CS-1 to expedite the development of a carbon stock study by 2026 and the development and adoption of policies, programs and regulations for maintaining and enhancing carbon sequestration in natural and working lands and implement tracking mechanisms by 2027. Alternative 3 would also modify RCAP Measure CS-3 to expedite the completion of feasibility studies to assess the capacity and suitability of potential sites for industrial carbon sequestration by 2027 and require the County to initiate project planning and development processes based on the findings of the feasibility

studies by 2030. The remainder of the RCAP would also be implemented as laid out in the RCAP document, and Alternative 3 would meet the Statewide 2030 and 2045 GHG emissions reduction goal.

Though Alternative 3 would not result in greater GHG emissions reductions compared to the RCAP and Alternative 2, it would advance Humboldt's climate action goals to a greater extent than the proposed plan, and Alternative 3 has been identified in the DEIR as the environmentally superior alternative. However, the expedited timelines for studies and implementation of Actions identified under Measures CS-1 and CS-3 are infeasible at this time. While the County has recently submitted a grant application and is working towards obtaining funding to develop a Natural and Working Lands Carbon Stock Inventory and a Carbon Sequestration Feasibility Study, the soonest anticipated completion date for the Inventory would be 2027, and 2028 for the Feasibility Study. Therefore, Alternative 3 is infeasible.

10. FINDING: EIR - STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS In accordance with Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County has evaluated the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve the project, and has determined that the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including regionwide or statewide environmental benefits, of the project outweigh its unavoidable, adverse environmental impacts so that the identified significant unavoidable impact(s) may be considered acceptable. The proposed project will result in a net environmental gain and will provide benefits described herein to the surrounding community and the County as a whole. Each benefit set forth below constitutes a separate, independent, and severable overriding consideration warranting approval of the project, despite the unavoidable impact. Substantial evidence in the record demonstrates that the County would derive the following benefits from the project:

EVIDENCE: a) <u>Economic Benefits</u>

Adoption of the RCAP may provide economic benefits, such as creating jobs, saving residents money on energy costs through

efficiency measures, or by fostering new technologies. As well, adoption of the RCAP would increase the County's and other local government agency's ability to obtain funding for future projects to implement the RCAP. Adoption of the RCAP could provide important economic growth Countywide

b) Legal Requirements and Policy Goals
Adopting the RCAP acts on Policy AQ-P9 and Implementation Measure AQ-IM3 of the Air Quality Element in the General Plan. The RCAP is a mitigation measure for the 2017 General Plan update, and adopting the RCAP is necessary to comply with state or regional mandates for reducing GHG emissions and to achieve broader environmental goals. The RCAP is a policy requirement of the 2017 General Plan update and the RCAP has been prepared to address this policy.

c) Social Benefits
The plan might offer improved community health, enhance regional mobility, or provide for other long-term needs for the community such as infrastructure and grid improvements.

d) Technological Benefits
The plan could enhance green technologies within the region, including microgrid projects in rural areas, and encourage the production and use of sustainable alternative fuels.

e) Regionwide and Statewide Environmental Benefits
Adopting the RCAP would have significant regionwide benefits by addressing climate change issues such as reducing GHG emissions and increasing air quality, increasing the protection and management of natural and working lands, encouraging future restoration projects and increase biodiversity, and reducing wildfire risk. As well, the plan would allow the County and other local government agencies to work towards achieving state goals in line with SB 32 and therefore assist the state in reaching their overall goals for reducing GHG emissions and addressing Statewide climate change

f) Infeasibility of Alternatives
The environmentally superior alternative to the RCAP, the Carbon Sequestration Alternative 3, was found to be infeasible due to increased timelines of RCAP implementation measures,

and this alternative is not being recommended for adoption. However, the Sustainable Communities Alternative 2 is being recommended as many local jurisdictions are already working to achieve these goals.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Humboldt:

1. Certify that the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Humboldt Regional Climate Action Plan and CEQA GHG Emissions Thresholds (SCH# 2024081319) has been completed in compliance with CEQA; and

2. Adopt the Statement of Overriding Considerations; and

3. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The foregoing Resolution is hereby passed and adopted after review and consideration of all the evidence on **October 16, 2025**.

The motion was made by COMMISSIONER LORNA MCFARLANE and seconded by COMMISSIONER IVER SKAVDAL and the following vote:

AYES: Commissioners: Lorna McFarlane, Iver Skavdal, Peggy O'Neill

NOES: Commissioners: Sarah West, Jerome Qiriazi

ABSTAIN: Commissioners:

ABSENT: Commissioners: Noah Levy, Thomas Mulder

DECISION: Motion carried 3/2

I, John H. Ford, Secretary to the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct record of the action taken on the above-entitled matter by said Commission at a meeting held on the date noted above.

John H. Ford, Director,
Planning and Building Department