



## **Sierra Club Submission on Actions with High Mitigation Potential**

March 28, 2014

The Sierra Club is pleased to submit this document pursuant to paragraph 4 of FCCC/ADP/2013/L.4 and the request for submissions on opportunities for actions with high mitigation potential, including those with adaptation and sustainable co-benefits, as referred to in decision 1/CP.19, “Further Advancing the Durban Platform,” paragraph 5(a).

The Sierra Club ([www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)) is the largest and oldest grassroots environmental organization in the United States. Our work on environmental protection and clean energy development is conducted by a professional staff and volunteers representing 2.1 million active members and supporters.

We believe that it is critical that Workstream 2 under the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action should lead to real emissions reductions in the pre-2020 period. The climate science is clear that greenhouse gas emissions need to peak within this decade to have a chance of keeping global warming well below 2°C and to keep a 1.5°C upper limit achievable. The material below illustrates the potential that we see in enhanced mitigation action and emphasises the case that the UNFCCC could, and should be a platform to catalyse greater ambition.

We were pleased to have participated in the workshops on Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) at the ADP 2.4 session and are particularly pleased with the call for utilizing the existing relevant thematic bodies of the Convention, the Finance and Technology Mechanisms. We endorse involving these bodies to provide a clearinghouse or matching service for information on enabling technologies and appropriate financing. We hope to see a mandate of this work from COP 19.

At Sierra Club our climate work focuses on supporting energy policies that promote increased ambition and resilience, highlighting scalable efforts, domestically and beyond, and spotlighting those that are making these goals a reality on the ground. We do this through public education and, in some cases, with calls for member action or modest funding. We have particularly focused on innovative funding for off-grid RE, seen as the best solution for meeting the Sustainable Energy for All goals. This submission will

briefly highlight some efforts that might be relevant and scalable at the global level including examples of good work in EE and RE.

**Off-grid RE:** In the international sphere, our greatest focus has been on off-grid RE deployment, particularly innovative financing for the electrically un-served or under-served. For example we have partnered with Selco India<sup>1</sup> in bringing solar lighting systems and creating entrepreneurial opportunity for more than 150,000 rural households and small businesses in India. In addition we applaud efforts like Village Infrastructure Angels (VIA)<sup>2</sup> which has brought lighting to more than 2 million people in 20 countries; Global Off-Grid Lighting Association whose mission is to position off-grid lighting in the realm of small and medium enterprises rather than philanthropy; and the Development Maps<sup>3</sup> effort to map all of the off-grid RE households in the world providing data to open up expanded effort. And finally Sierra Club's own pilot effort in conjunction with Sunfunder<sup>4</sup>, a crowdsourced funder of off-grid RE, to support a RE project in Uganda.

**Developed Country local and off-grid clean energy:** The Sierra Club has since the 1960s been a strong advocate for energy efficiency and renewable energy in the U.S. domestic sphere. As early as 1972, the national board adopted policy statements concerning energy production, use and environmental protection. The Energy Resources Policy<sup>5</sup>, adopted in 2006, is a comprehensive statement considering most energy resources, establishing criteria for assessment, prioritization and inclusion within a context of maximizing benefits and equity, minimizing environmental and health impacts, and supporting strong climate response. The organization has long supported energy efficiency and renewable energy as the top priority at the national, regional and local level.

Similar to support of off-grid and local scale renewable energy in the international sphere, we have advocated for local-scale, sustainable and low-carbon resources domestically. For example, we support programs for the deployment of off-grid or hybrid RE relevant to developed country rural areas. Here we applaud the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)<sup>6</sup> which provides assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to install renewable energy systems such as solar panels or anaerobic digesters, and to make energy efficiency improvements such as installing irrigation pumps or replacing ventilation systems. With the increasing probability of power outages due to ever stronger storms and the substantial wait time for repairs as a result of storms, off-grid or hybrid connected RE systems make sense providing clean energy resources in a climate resilient manner.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.selco-india.com>

<sup>2</sup> <http://villageinfrastructure.org/how-it-works/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.developmentmaps.org>

<sup>4</sup> <http://sunfunder.com>

<sup>5</sup> <http://sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/#Energy>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_REAP.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_REAP.html)

And finally we would note our major domestic “Beyond Coal”<sup>7</sup> effort to retire coal plants and replace them with renewable energy that will open opportunities in the clean economy our future demands. Thanks to a strong partnership with other domestic organizations, to date this program has resulted in the retirement of 163 coal plants. It has been accompanied with a program to encourage our domestic membership to install solar PV on their own homes<sup>8</sup> and to educate our membership and the public on behavior changes that matter in the fight against climate change.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://content.sierraclub.org/coal/solutions>

<sup>8</sup> <http://oregon.sierraclub.org/solar/pv.html>