

CORVALLIS SUSTAINABILITY COALITION

Advocacy Policy

Purpose: This document outlines the Coalition's policy on advocacy related to public service activities and public policy positions.

I. Definitions

- a. *Advocacy:* Active support of an idea or cause.
- b. *Public service activities:* The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition engages in a number of activities that serve the greater public good. These include education and awareness campaigns, action team projects, and various events. These activities are intended to promote sustainability awareness, education and action. These activities are also intended to inform elected officials and members of boards and commissions of a sustainability perspective with the intent of having them give serious consideration to this perspective when they vote or make decisions. However, public service activities do not include taking a position on public policy.
- c. *Public policy positions:* A formal position on public policy refers to organization-level support for or opposition to official government actions. Government actions include, but are not limited to:
 - draft or enacted local ordinances or laws
 - initiatives
 - referenda or petitions
 - ballot measures

II. Policy

- a. Coalition public service activities that are directed at elected officials and members of boards and commissions must be sanctioned by either the Executive Committee and/or Steering Committee, depending on the nature of the activity.
- b. The Coalition does not take positions on public policy.
- c. No one in the Coalition, including members of the Steering Committee, Executive Committee, Action Teams, and other committees, may represent themselves as speaking for the Coalition unless such representation has been approved by the Executive Committee or the Steering Committee.

III. Guidelines

- a. In determining whether or not a public service activity will be recommended, the Steering Committee will:
 - i. Be guided by the Coalition's guiding objectives, vision, mission, goals, and current action plan, not by individual agendas;
 - ii. Draw upon the expertise and knowledge of Coalition partners, action teams, and volunteers;

- iii. Ensure that no part (expenditures and effort) of the activities of the Coalition shall be attempting to influence legislation; and
 - iv. Ensure that the Coalition will not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.
- b. The Coalition Steering Committee has the authority to approve or deny public service activities of the Coalition that are recommended by the Executive Committee.
 - c. For evaluation of proposed public service activities, the Steering Committee will utilize criteria outlined in Appendix A.

IV. Procedures

- a. For proposed public service activities, the Steering Committee will follow the process outlined in its Decision-making Policy (Attachment B).
- b. Action Teams and Committees will be guided by the examples provided (Attachment C).
- c. This policy will be reviewed one year from date of adoption and every five years thereafter, or more often as needed.

(This revised policy was adopted by the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition Steering Committee on July 8, 2014.)

APPENDIX A: **Criteria for Evaluating Public Service Activities**

The following criteria will be used by the Sustainability Coalition's Executive Committee and Steering Committee to evaluate public service activities.

Outcomes

1. What is the desired outcome of the proposed advocacy?
2. To what degree will the proposed advocacy contribute to sustainability in our community?
3. What is the likelihood of success?

Alignment: Is the request consistent with

1. Guiding Objectives?
2. Community Sustainability Action Plan?
3. Strategic Plan?

Capacity: Do we have adequate

1. Expertise?
2. Time?
3. Money or other resources?

Partner/Community Relations: Will the proposed advocacy

1. Enhance or degrade the Coalition's image in the community?
2. Increase or decrease our potential to recruit new volunteers, energize existing volunteers, and/or empower people to become more active and effective in the community?
3. Encourage collaboration or alienation among our partner organizations?
4. Be inclusive or divisive?

APPENDIX B:

Decision-making Policy

(Revision approved 6/12/12)

Purpose: To achieve maximum effectiveness and credibility, implementation of the Community Sustainability Action Plan needs to be unified and organized. This document outlines the decision-making process of the Coalition in order to ensure accountability, consistency and coordination between the Coalition Steering Committee and the Action Teams and Committees that will implement the Action Plan. These are consistent with our adopted bylaws.

I. Authority

- a. The Steering Committee sets policy and budget; approves public positions submitted by Action Teams and Committees; and designates official spokespersons for the Coalition.
- b. The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Coalition, including carrying out the goals and policies of the Coalition. The Executive Committee has the authority to make operational decisions on behalf of the organization between Steering Committee meetings. The Executive Committee is responsible for the coordination and management of Action Plan implementation and approves actions and grant proposals.
- c. Action Teams and Committees perform the tasks necessary to implement the Action Plan.

II. Process – All decisions of the Steering Committee, Executive Committee, Action Teams, and Committees are made using a modified consensus model. Consensus is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather, it is the overall sense of the group, as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. If consensus cannot be reached within a reasonable period, a vote will be taken.

III. Action Team and Committee Requests

- a. Approval from the Executive Committee is required for work on actions in the Action Plan. Action Teams will submit an Action Review Form to the Executive Committee for all proposed projects in pursuit of Action Plan goals. Within one week of receiving an Action Review Form from an Action Team, the Executive Committee will forward their proposed decision to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will respond to the Executive Committee with questions, comments or concerns within one week. If no major issues are raised during this “open comment” period, the Executive Committee decision stands. The Executive Committee notifies the Action Team of approval, disapproval, modification, or the need for more information prior to making a decision.
- b. Approval from the Executive Committee is required for grant applications.

IV. Advocacy

- a. For public policy positions, refer to the Coalition’s Advocacy Policy.

- b. For public service activities that involve testimony or communication with elected officials and/or members of boards and commissions, submit a written request to the Coalition Director outlining:
- The target audience
 - Date of communication
 - Content of the message, such as copy of testimony, Power Point slides and script, letters, etc.
 - Who is delivering the communication

The Director will present all such requests to the Executive Committee for review. The Director will provide notification to the Steering Committee of all requests received and will present requests supported by the majority of the Executive Committee to the Steering Committee for consideration.

- c. Only the designated Coalition spokesperson may represent him or herself as speaking for the Coalition unless the testimony has been approved by the Steering Committee.

APPENDIX C: **Guidelines for Action Teams and Committees**

Advocacy is defined as “active support of an idea or cause”. The Sustainability Coalition’s Advocacy Policy makes a distinction between “public service” advocacy and “public policy” advocacy. The Coalition’s action teams are encouraged to participate in public service advocacy, but are not permitted to engage in public policy advocacy. Public service activities are those that promote sustainability awareness, education and action. These activities are also intended to inform elected officials and members of boards and commissions of a sustainability perspective with the intent of having them give serious consideration to this perspective when they vote or make decisions. However, public service activities do not include taking a position on public policy. The chart below provides examples to help volunteers distinguish between these types of advocacy.

NOTE: A written request is required for public service activities that involve official Coalition testimony or communication with elected officials and/or members of boards and commissions. See Appendix B.

Action Team	Public SERVICE Advocacy (encouraged)	Public POLICY Advocacy (NOT permitted)
Community Inclusion	Make a presentation to City Council on the Happiness Initiative and how it has been used in other communities	Provide testimony to City Council to support code changes establishing Happiness indicators
Economic Vitality	Sponsor a forum featuring organizations and institutions that have re-invested in fossil fuel-free companies	Submit a letter to the editor to support divestment of City funds
Education	Host a tour of sustainability demonstration projects at local schools	Lobby the School Board to establish a policy requiring a district-wide recycling/composting program
Energy	Distribute information about Seeds for the Sol, Oregon Solar Cooperative, and other programs promoting solar	Provide testimony to the Planning Commission requesting code changes that require solar installations at all new developments
Food	Make a presentation to County Commissioners on the need for increased local food processing	Testify to County Commissioners in support of legislation related to food processing operations
Health & Human Services	Make presentations to local groups about alternatives to herbicides	Lobby the City Council to establish a policy banning use of herbicides on City property
Housing	Make a presentation to the Planning Commission on the benefits of green building incentives	Provide testimony to the Planning Commission in support of code changes that establish green building incentives
Land Use	Provide information to City Council on the low percentage of students housed on the OSU campus compared with other universities	Lobby City Council to adopt legislation that provides for area planning to occur prior to additional construction related to student housing
Natural Areas	Make a presentation to the county Commissioners on successful examples of riparian buffers on agricultural land	Lobby the County Commissioners to support legislation requiring riparian buffers
Transportation	Submit an article to the G-T on the benefits of the City’s fareless bus system	Submit a letter to the editor in support of legislation to extend the system fees
Waste Prevention	Create an awards program to recognize businesses’ waste prevention practices	Provide testimony to City Council in support of legislation that mandates commercial recycling
Water	Establish and publicize a demonstration project featuring greywater use	Lobby the State Legislature in support of legislation mandating greywater use at all new developments