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Dave Davis to Step Down from Community Environmental Council; Board Appoints Sigrid Wright as First Female CEO

SANTA BARBARA, CA, July 13, 2015– The Community Environmental Council (CEC) Board of Directors announced today that Sigrid Wright has been named the first female CEO of the 45-year-old non-profit, to replace current CEO Dave Davis when he steps down at the end of the month.

Davis’ History with CEC

Davis – who joined the CEC Board of Directors in 2004 and became CEO in 2005 – led the organization through more than a decade of focus on regional solutions to climate change and clean energy development. In 2012 he was also elected President and Chairman of the Board, roles he will continue to serve during the transition period.

Under Davis’ leadership, the nonprofit led an effort to successfully convince the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta to approve energy efficiency “reach codes” that exceeded state standards – and then convinced the state of California to adopt higher standards as well. The organization also helped secure over 200 public fueling stations for electric vehicles in the tri-county area, and hosted about 20 cutting-edge green car shows that spurred the region into one of the highest adoption rates of clean fuel cars in the U.S.

When he started with CEC, Davis notes, there were no major renewable energy projects in the County. Now, in part thanks to public support generated by CEC, several large-scale solar projects have been installed by the City and County of Santa Barbara, a utility-scale solar project is being built in Cuyama, and CEC is running a social enterprise, Solarize, which has helped more than 440 homeowners across four counties install solar on their homes.

“The work we do is fueled by passion, and that’s what makes it worthwhile,” remarked Davis, who, prior to taking the helm at CEC, had served for 25 years as Community Development Director for the City of Santa Barbara. “We are stronger, better, and more stable than we’ve ever been. I couldn’t be prouder of our talented staff and board, or more confident in what this organization will accomplish under Sigrid’s leadership.”

Wright’s History with CEC

Wright has served with CEC since 1995, in recent years as Assistant Director. In 2007, she co-authored [A New Energy Direction: A Blueprint for Santa Barbara County](#) – one of the first regional energy plans in the U.S. to outline a path for moving away from fossil fuels. Over the last eight years, CEC has used this blueprint to pursue aggressive strategies that include advancing local and statewide policy changes, advancing



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cutting-edge technologies, and educating the public about energy solutions. After the energy blueprint was published, Wright was instrumental in raising about \$1 million in program funding to implement the plan.

“It’s an honor to lead the next chapter of CEC, and to build on our legacy of finding positive environmental solutions,” she said. “Our board is the most vibrant, engaged, and experienced group I’ve seen in my 20 years with CEC, our staff has over 50 years in collective environmental non-profit experience, and our close-knit community of past executives, board members, and founders brings an unparalleled level of wisdom and support.”

Such depth of experience is essential, Wright noted, because “our community has some daunting challenges ahead as we look at how to maintain quality of life amidst a changing climate, long-term drought, increasing strains on resources, and other significant challenges.” She noted that “partnerships have become an important tool for CEC as more people wake up to the incredible fortune that we have living in Santa Barbara, and the responsibility we have to act as stewards.”

Wright’s partnership-building accomplishments include overseeing the management of the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival, in which she worked with community partners to grow the festival to a profitable two-day event that attracts about 30,000 visitors a year – making it one of the largest, longest-running Earth Day celebrations in the U.S. Wright also serves as program facilitator for the [South County Energy Efficiency Partnership](#), a collaboration between local cities and utilities that helps organizations and homeowners reduce energy consumption. Most recently, she initiated a community-based visioning process that looks at the health and sustainability of the region’s food system, catalyzing a partnership with the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara Foundation, and the Orfaea Foundation to produce a countywide “[food action plan](#).” This project is co-chaired by County Supervisors Salud Carbajal and Steve Lavagnino.

Prior to CEC, Wright worked for several organizations in Washington, D.C., including the Alliance to Save Energy and the National Wildlife Federation. She has a background in communications – holding a B.S. in Journalism from the University of Oregon and an M.A. in Communications Design from the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts at the University of Baltimore – and was presented with the 2015 Women of Achievement Award by the Association of Women in Communications - SB.

In addition, Wright is an active voice in Santa Barbara’s nonprofit community. She is an alum of the Santa Barbara Foundation’s [Katherine Harvey Fellows program](#) and the [Courage to Lead](#) program for non-profit leaders, and sits on the Board of [Leading From Within](#). She is also a Board member with U.S. Green Communities, and commissioner for the Santa Barbara County Commission for Women.

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“I’m thrilled to see Sigrid take the helm as the first female CEO of CEC,” stated Laura Burton Capps, CEC Board member and County Commissioner for Women. “She is a strong leader with the vision, commitment, and experience to build on the past successes of CEC and help forge a more sustainable future for Santa Barbara.”

Wright will be the seventh person to hold this position since CEC was founded in 1970. Other former CEOs are: Paul Relis (who went on to serve on the California Integrated Waste Management Board in Sacramento); Hal Conklin (former Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara and executive with Southern California Edison); Jon Clark (current President of the James S. Bower Foundation); Bud Laurent (former County Supervisor for San Luis Obispo County); and Bob Ferris (former Executive Director of Cascadia Wildlands).

Next Steps

As CEC looks ahead to its 50th anniversary, both Wright and Davis agree that a rapid transition to sustainable methods for managing water, food and energy are of critical importance. Recently, CEC celebrated an important victory that could move the county in this direction when the organization successfully convinced the County Board of Supervisors to approve a feasibility study that will evaluate the potential for Community Choice Energy – a powerful tool that offers communities local control over energy and a choice for cleaner electricity at competitive rates.

This year, CEC’s 45th Anniversary Green Gala on Friday, September 25 at the Lark will honor Dave Davis. A key funding and awareness-raising event, the evening will celebrate his accomplishments and contributions to the organization, the community, and the environmental movement as a whole. Davis remains committed to civic duty and is looking forward to new challenges, such as his recent appointment to the City of Santa Barbara’s Water Commission. He will also continue his role as MTD Board Chairman and stay active in CEC.

About the Community Environmental Council

In 1970, CEC incorporated in response to the devastating oil spill off Santa Barbara’s shores, seeking new ways of thinking about environmental systems. For 45 years, CEC has remained at the forefront of the environmental movement, leading the Santa Barbara region – and at times California and the nation – in creative solutions to some of the toughest environmental problems. Today CEC is focused on climate solutions, encouraging global change through local action with five initiatives: Drive Less, Choose Electric, Go Solar, Ditch Plastic, and Eat Local.

For more information on CEC:

- Find CEC on the web at cecsb.org
- Like CEC on Facebook at facebook.com/cecsb
- Follow CEC on Twitter @CECSB and on Instagram @CEC_SB
- Call CEC at 805-963-0583

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