



Date: October 17, 2016
To: Chatham County Board of Commissioners
From: Climate Change Advisory Committee
Re: Update from Education Subcommittee
Climate Change Education Conference

The Education Subcommittee of the Climate Change Advisory Committee is tasked to "make recommendations to the County regarding education of the public on issues relating to climate change." One recommendation proposed by the Education Subcommittee to meet this goal is to host a regional climate change education conference.

The Abundance Foundation has been holding a Climate Change Conference in Chatham County for three consecutive years. We have no interest in duplicating their efforts; therefore we are currently in discussions with their Executive Director, Tami Schwerin, on collaborating with their group in hopes to extend the reach of what might otherwise be accomplished by one group, alone. Also, undertaking the planning and development of a conference involves a great deal of time, money and expertise. Abundance, a group that has strong roots in supporting Chatham County citizens, has been holding conferences and planning large events here for many years.

We are working with the CISA, Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments Project (a NOAA Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments team based at the University of South Carolina with a mission to serve the Carolinas), to identify areas where they might be able to support these efforts as either a sponsor, through providing professional speakers, or both.

Additionally, we are working to identify several regional corporate sponsors (and perhaps the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation and the Chatham County Chamber of Commerce).

Conference Details:

- Tiered ticket cost (climate change will impact everyone at every economic level, those who cannot afford to pay will not have to pay)
- Anticipated Date: All-day on a Saturday / Mid-March 2017
- Site: the new Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center at CCCC

We would propose that while organized by the Climate Change Advisory Committee, this conference should be an official project of County Government with underlying support for identifying possible funding sources (such as Chatham Park, the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and such things as volunteers and other items with which county staff may be more familiar than we are.

We request approval to move forward in planning this conference as partners with Abundance.