

Coordinating Committee

It was clear to the early organizers of the Green Party that the group could be plagued by inaction. This had been obvious in the regional and national GCoC organization: things were not getting done between gatherings. Those who took initiative were often criticized. Thus came the old joke: How many Greens does it take to change a lightbulb?

Ten - one to change the lightbulb and nine to criticize the process!

An Interim Coordinating Committee was established at Fresno II to get things done between meetings. This group was subsequently replaced with a region-based group at Santa Barbara. At this point, pending any further modifications of the Bylaws, the Coordinating Committee is basically composed of representatives selected by the 10 regions.

Each region appoints one Coordinating Committee member and the four largest regions (in terms of straight Green registrations) appoint two. Under this rubric, the regions designate 14 members.

Six additional seats are reserved for at-large representatives, ideally chosen by the plenary to bring gender and ethnic balance to a 20-seat body.

The Coordinating Committee is not a policy-making group. It has been given several administrative tasks in the Bylaws, including:

1. Establish agenda and select facilitators for general meetings.
2. Monitor and assist Standing Committees work and refer matters to Committees.
3. Request and receive regular reports from Committees.
4. Authorize and ratify specific expenditures.
5. Authorize and carry out the decisions of the plenary and make executive (not policy) decisions between statewide meetings.
6. Make statements in the name of the Party.
7. Retain legal council on behalf of the Party.
8. Make decisions based on legal counsel.

Under the current version of Green Party Election Rules, the Coordinating Committee can be called upon to mediate intra-regional disputes over the opening and closing of races.

When electoral districts crossed regional lines and the affected County Councils could not reach consensus, the Coordinating Committee was asked to make a ruling. The group also became embroiled in settling conflicts within regions (especially between counties) and was heavily criticized by the losing parties.

Greens from Mendocino and Los Angeles sued the Party on the constitutionality of closing races. The courts upheld the Party rules in this first test case, which has been appealed by the Secretary of State and is

still pending.

While its formal role is limited, the Coordinating Committee can play an important part in maintaining statewide unity by informally but proactively enhancing lines of communication.

Since every region has representation on the Coordinating Committee, no one need be in the dark on what the group is doing. Any Green can share access to all minutes and documents regarding the Coordinating Committee by contacting the regional representative.

The Secretary of State in Sacramento requires a list of party officers and a contact phone number for inquiries from voters, officials and the media. Since the Green Party has no formal hierarchy like other parties, it is inaccurate to list anyone as "Chairman" (a word we wouldn't use even if such an office existed).

Thus far, the Coordinating Committee has offered various members as perfunctory "Co-Chairs." The Coordinating Committee member from the Sacramento/Sierra Region has been designated the "Liaison to the Secretary of State" for reasons of proximity.

These roles are necessary accommodations to the state's bureaucracy, but in no way are seats of power.

Frustration and tension are always created when someone has a lot of responsibility but very little authority. Your Coordinating Committee representative needs your support and understanding.