

Public Comment

RCEA Board of Directors
April 22, 2021 Meeting

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

From: [April Walton](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Solar array on Hatchery Road
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 1:18:00 PM

I am one of your customers and live in the vicinity of the proposed solar farm. I totally support alternative energies and know you are moving forward to make Humboldt more green but I am extremely disappointed that you have put advancement of alternative energy ahead of impacts on local neighborhoods and communities. It will be a huge eyesore and present other problems to nearby property owners as well as outdoor enthusiasts who use Hatchery Road and the surrounding area for a variety of activities. The downgrading of this area's beauty could have been avoided by simply finding one of many unused old lumber mills who have vacant land for such a project. The lumber mills are sitting idle, unused and in areas that are not adjacent to towns and neighborhoods so the impact would be minimal.

You are progressive and tenacious in acquiring sites for alternative energy advancement but you have really sacrificed 'the little guy' and steamrolled the project to an area that is not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and recreational area. I am sure that the Guynup Trust was eager for this deal to go through as was Kernen Construction since it was his address that was used as a designation for mailing purposes. If there were no other suitable sites I could understand why it would be placed on agricultural land, but the fact is there are several sites that would be more appropriate and not infringe on neighborhoods nor totally change the character of the surrounding area.

I am very disappointed that your company now seems to be concerned with advancement of alternative energy no matter what the cost to local neighborhoods and communities. I was a big fan of RCEA but this has left me bewildered as I feel you rushed into this agreement before exploring the use of other sites that would have less of an impact on the surrounding area. For many of us who live nearby or use Hatchery Road for enjoyment, we will now have to see this monstrosity for the next 20 years.

SOLAR - YES , HATCHERY ROAD SITE - NO

Sincerely,
April Walton

Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

From: [Ken Miller](#)
To: [Lori Taketa](#)
Subject: Widespread Distributed Solar
Date: Monday, April 19, 2021 9:00:03 AM
Attachments: [WDS Solarizing Humboldt RCEA.docx](#)

Dear Ms Taketa,

Please distribute to Board and CAC

Dear RCEA Board & CAC,

The attached appeal for networked Widespread Distributed Solar is an urgent one. Modern technologies have advanced to the point where all RCEA's partners would become energy profit centers. The relation between on-site solar electricity and the critical necessity to transition to Electric Vehicles makes WDS indispensable

The path is a simple one: hire someone who shares the vision and opportunity to begin implementing WDS as a priority project of RCEA.

Announce to the WDS industry that we are open for business.

Initially, our capacity for WDS would be systematically documented, financing options explored, regulatory hurdles surmounted, competitive bids considered.

It could happen fast, not the meager pace of RCEA's current one-a day projected goal for solar PV.

RCEA has been wedded to big energy projects that divide our communities because of their inevitable and unavoidable impacts.

WDS avoids that, creating the opposite: shared energy wealth with autonomy, resilience, security.

Congress is considering a 30% tax credit for microgrids, more incentives are sure to follow.

Consequently, it will take Board vision, courage and action to implement WDS, a political decision, since the technical and economic capacities are established.

Will RCEA be represented at the Microgrid 21 conference, early registration is free?

Thank you, Ken Miller

"A Roof is a Terrible Thing to Waste."

As we celebrate the 26-acre Blue Lake 4 megawatt solar array on farmland called “agrivoltaics” (MRU 4/8), we should not be blinded to better, more modern opportunities, like networked Widespread Distributed Solar (WDS).

WDS produces electricity from solar panels installed on the built environment where impacts have already occurred, close to where the electricity will be used: public and private roofs, parking lots and other already developed or “improved” spaces, including brownfields and abandoned mill sites.

Panels networked into solar and community nano- and micro-grids charge batteries and electric vehicles (EVs), heat and illuminate buildings, and sell electricity to PGE, all the while retaining resilience during natural disasters.

Many of us would share in networked energy wealth, add equity to our buildings, and increase our access to reliable electricity during grid disruptions. Reliability and resilience of the main grid is also enhanced.

Electric vehicles or “EVs” are critical to combating climate change (70% of local emissions are attributable to transportation), and Widespread Distributed Solar makes EVs economically and technically irresistible. Charging vehicles on-site from owner-produced electricity can pay for the EV and even the panels in a few years, and is essential in order to minimize dependence on electricity from massive central

sources (coal, gas, solar, wind, nukes) to power charging stations. We need to feed the grid from our rooftops instead.

EVs are better in every way than Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles: no pollution, no petroleum, quiet, long-lived, low maintenance. EVs are mobile batteries that can supply buildings and critical facilities with emergency electricity.

Opponents of the Blue Lake agrovoltaics contend that agrovoltaic's limited sheep grazing and "pollinator garden" are "window dressing" to ostensibly satisfy the Humboldt County General Plan requirement that conversion of AE land, with prime soils that are critical to the sustainability of the County, *should only occur if there are no feasible alternatives and there is overriding public interest.*

The precedent of exploiting valuable habitat, farm and resource lands for energy production is dangerous, shortsighted, and unnecessary.

Residents note that there are over 1500 acres of brownfields, and 1,170 acres of industrial former mill sites that could potentially produce 148 MW of power; and thousands of roofs in the built environment that are far more suited to solar energy production with minimal impacts.

The EPA has invested 11.4 million dollars to revitalize brownfields in Humboldt County and the EPA has a program called RE-Powering Americas Land initiative to install solar on these brownfields.

Why approve and promote divisive projects like the Blue Lake agrovoltaics when WDS can meet our energy, climate, and economic goals and needs? WDS benefits everyone with minimal adverse impacts, bringing our communities together over energy goals, rather than dividing us: “If California does not modernize its grid and power delivery infrastructure via sustainable premium power provided by microgrids, the state will be thwarted in its efforts to meet not only its economic and public safety needs, but these aggressive carbon reduction and renewable energy goals.” (Microgrids-5-8-19.pdf)

Our municipal and County representatives to Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) have an unparalleled opportunity to create a legacy of prosperity and resilience with WDS; and they could start tomorrow, because the technological and economic assistance is immediately available.

The upcoming “Microgrid 21” conference is a recruiting ground for talent & government-industry connections promoting WDS—a recipe for implementing WDS, including financing economics. (microgridknowledge.com/microgrid-2021-agenda)

Municipalities in the US, many with similar solar profiles as ours (ilsr.org), are implementing WDS (28% of microgrids in US are in NY & Pennsylvania). The Solar Energy Technologies Office of the Department of Energy (SETO) is a deep resource for information, help and funding.

WDS fits seamlessly into Redwood Coast Energy Authority’s Feed-In Tariff (FIT) program, microgrid projects, and EV and heat-pump rebates that are all components of WDS, but they are

poor passive stepchildren to RCEA's centralized electricity projects.

WDS is a contemporary and democratic electrical supply system that spreads wealth, pays for itself, reduces fire risks, incentivizes EVs, enhances secure resilience, creates the most local jobs, adds equity, preserves vulnerable wild habitat, agriculture, and forests, and transitions to EVs.

To those who say "we need it all," WDS must be part of the "all," a priority program like offshore wind. RCEA should hire someone who can attract private industry and government grants to create a rural WDS model.

Introducing a 30% microgrid tax credit bill in Congress recently, Rep Panetta explained: "Expanding and deploying microgrids can harness clean energy sources, keep our homes and critical infrastructure connected when the larger grid fails, and lead to reliable and consistent electricity for our homes and safety for our communities." The wave of incentives has begun.

Now's the time to invite industry to compete to implement "A solar panel on every roof, an EV in every garage, and microgrids in every Humboldt community."

Ken Miller

[REDACTED]

McKinleyville, CA 95519

[REDACTED]

**When the next energy
crisis comes...**

**... keep the power
with the people.**

**TELL GOVERNOR NEWSOM – STOP CALIFORNIA
UTILITIES FROM BLOCKING THE SUN!**

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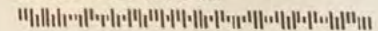


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KEN MILLER
OR CURRENT RESIDENT

MCKINLEYVILLE, CA 95519-3827



To avert the next energy crisis, we must **PROTECT** solar net metering...

...to allow more of our friends and neighbors to **PRODUCE THEIR OWN ENERGY** and send it back to the grid!

Los Angeles Times

"BIG LITTLE SOLUTIONS TO AVERT BLACKOUTS"

"... state officials are scrambling to find additional energy resources that can be added to the grid — and six months isn't enough time to build the type of centralized infrastructure historically favored by utilities and regulators.

The tight timeline is an opportunity for companies that install batteries paired with rooftop solar panels or that aggregate energy savings across networks of homes and businesses. They say they can move quickly to increase energy supply or ease demand — especially with supportive policies from Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration."

"This is an emergency," said Lynn Jurich, chief executive of San Francisco-based Sunrun Inc., a solar and battery installer. "How we regulate our energy markets and how we incorporate innovation — we need to go a lot faster."

Newsom has used similar language, referring to 2020's record-breaking wildfires as a "climate damn emergency" and pledging in September to "fast-track" the state's climate change efforts. He later ordered regulators to ban the sale of gasoline-powered cars by 2035 and called on the Legislature to ban the drilling technique known as fracking.

But Newsom hasn't taken the kinds of near-term actions that clean energy advocates say would reduce climate pollution and create badly needed jobs while helping keep the lights on next summer."

"With time running short before next summer, state officials are hurrying to shore up power supplies. Newsom asked them to take climate change into account, writing in an August letter that California "must do more and faster to prevent future outages as we continue to work to transform energy generation."

SOURCE: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-01-05/california-scrambling-avoid-blackouts-solar-batteries>

We can **fight climate change** and continue California's bold leadership on

5.1 - Amendment to Humboldt Sawmill Company Power Purchase Agreement

RCEA Board Members
County of Humboldt – Mike Wilson
City of Trinidad – Dave Grover
City of Arcata – Sarah Schaefer
City of Blue Lake – Chris Curran
City of Eureka – Scott Bauer
City of Ferndale – Stephen Avis, Vice Chair
City of Fortuna – Mike Losey
City of Rio Dell – Frank Wilson
Humboldt Municipal Water District – Sheri Woo, Chair

Dear Dave Grover and other RCEA Board Members:

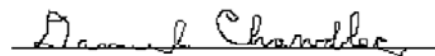
Last month I wrote you a persuasive letter about why you should not approve a ten year contract with Humboldt Sawmill. Unfortunately RCEA staff were not persuaded.

Drawing on the presentation last month and Matthew Marshall's recent presentations on wind power, here is a very brief summary of why the ten year contract is a bad idea:

- It locks us into burning biomass for several years after we are likely to have a great deal of local wind power.
- It would nullify the attempt to find alternative, less polluting and warming uses for sawmill waste, in which 8 of 9 of you were very interested.
- When the contract came up the first time you had not heard Michael Furniss' assessment that the power plant "creates warming." A great deal of it – partly because Humboldt Sawmill is so much less efficient per megawatt created than is even gas.
- Although biomass is part of the carbon cycle, in the critical 10 -30 year time frame we face, that 3 million metric tons of CO₂ will not be sequestered by new forest growth. It will just contribute to warming and therefore sea level rise. Don't we need to take a stand at some point if there are alternatives?
- Richard Engel did give you an alternative way of meeting the SB 350 requirements:

"If RCEA does not extend its contract with HSC, we will need to seek other means of ensuring SB 350 compliance.... The most likely outcome would be a contract for an existing renewable energy project outside of Humboldt County...."

Since, as Richard failed to mention, we have a probable path toward 100% local renewable sources (wind) before 2030, the argument against contracting for a renewable source outside Humboldt to meet this requirement seems based on a self-imposed blind-fold. Local is only better if it does not contribute to the climate emergency.



Your constituent,

Daniel Chandler, Ph.D.

Trinidad, CA 95570

Submission on Agenda Item 5.1 to the RCEA Board Meeting by Nancy Ihara

RCEA does a great deal to promote clean, renewable energy.

I know that RCEA staff are as concerned about the planetary impacts of climate change as I am.

Therefore I am baffled and dismayed by the proposed 10 year amended contract with the Humboldt Sawmill Company.

A subcommittee of RCEA's Citizen Advisory Committee recently gave a report to the RCEA Board about possible alternative uses of sawmill wood wastes. The four years remaining in the present contract with HSC could be used to explore and realize some of these ideas by the company, by HSU, by RCEA consultants and others.

At the last RCEA Board meeting a letter signed by 500+ scientists in opposition to the use of biomass for energy was cited. I would like to quote from it:

Quote: "Burning wood is ... carbon-inefficient, ... the wood burned for energy emits more carbon up smokestacks than using fossil fuels. Overall, for each kilowatt hour of heat or electricity produced, using wood initially is likely to add two to three times as much carbon to the air as using fossil fuels." End of quote.

Supporters of the use of biomass for energy production often argue, however, that it is renewable because trees burned are replaced by trees that then sequester carbon. The authors of the letter dismiss this idea:

Quote: "Regrowing trees and displacement of fossil fuels may eventually pay off this carbon debt, but regrowth takes time the world does not have to solve climate change. As numerous studies have shown, this burning of wood will increase warming for decades to centuries." End of quote

I realize that RCEA has financial issues to deal with and an obligation to comply with S.B. 350 and that these factors have influenced their decision to extend the contract with HSC for an additional 6 years. I question whether procuring energy from HSC is the most cost effective way of dealing with RCEA's finances. The Board should investigate other procurement opportunities that do not have such high greenhouse gas and toxic emissions and may actually be less expensive.

The community looks to RCEA as a leader in securing and utilizing truly clean and renewable energy. The RCEA Board should provide leadership in the effort to deal with our climate crisis and reject this proposed amended power purchase agreement with HSC.