

Public Comment

RCEA Community Advisory Committee
May 11, 2021

From: [Ken Miller](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Widespread Distributed Solar
Date: Sunday, May 9, 2021 6:57:13 PM
Attachments: [WDS Solarizing Humboldt RCEA.pdf](#)

Non-Agenda Item
Public Comment

Dear CAC,

I encourage you all to read this and then to read Matthew Marshall's OpEd in the MRU in which he defends RCEA's commitment to centralized electricity production at the expense of local solar on the built environment, to our collective detriment.

Marshall employs the tactic of deriding WDS by painting my advocacy as an unrealistic panacea, but acknowledging implicitly that WDS is at best a passive non-program of RCEA.

You will note Marshall's celebration of a 100MW solar array somewhere in the Central Valley, and biomass, and "small" hydro, with nary a mention of the horrendous habitat and pollution impacts, and ongoing reliance on transmitting power over long, fire-prone distances.

Marshall's defensive defense proves my point: RCEA needs to hire someone from the microgrid-solar PV-EV industry to attract a hungry industry to do what RCEA has no interest or capacity to implement. He never mentions the Microgrid21 conference that is a fertile gathering of talent in this arena, which I hope RCEA attends (it is free).

Marshall also questions the capacity for rooftop solar here and in other cities to supply our needs and those of the "world." Really? Imagine every roof in LA, San Diego, or in his favorite, the Central Valley, paired with networked microgrids and EVs/batteries. How much more would we then need? Is this not the way to transition to EVs without depending on central electricity? Democratization of our energy production and wealth is now technologically feasible. That's the 21st Century formula.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Miller

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

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McKinleyville, CA 95519

[REDACTED]

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

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

**TELL GOVERNOR NEWSOM – STOP CALIFORNIA
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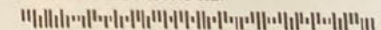


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KEN MILLER
OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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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

From: [SUZANNE ATIYEH](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Wind
Date: Monday, May 10, 2021 9:34:23 AM

attn: Matthew Marshall

I am sending you a copy of a letter I submitted to the Times Standard recently.
I feel this topic deserves sincere consideration.

I would love to see an RFP process go out to draw innovative people to this area for a variety of cutting edge projects that are cleaner and less harmful. I truly believe California can set the standard if we use the bright people we have in state to put their minds to work.

Respectfully,
Suzanne E. Atiyeh

S. E. A.

Begin forwarded message:

From: SUZANNE ATIYEH [REDACTED] >
Date: April 21, 2021 at 11:18:50 AM PDT
To: letters@times-standard.com
Subject: My Word, attention Marc Valles

This letter is being written to those who hope that wind energy off our coast will be a benefit to Humboldt County. There are many reasons why people support the concept of wind energy units being built here, and then sold to buyers who may install them here, and elsewhere in the world.

Let's be clear about our thinking on this topic.

Who will benefit the most?

I've heard it said that since we have tremendous wind energy potential here, "it would be a gold mine."

For whom exactly?

For the people who own the turbines and sell that energy.

I hate to disillusion anyone, but mega companies such as Masdar, based out of Abu Dhabi and The UAE, are raking in millions of dollars off of everyone's wind, all over the world, including the US and Scotland. Do you think they care about our birds? Or fisheries?

We would get some money out of that, from jobs. Some.

**We would be selling our wind, our birds, our sea rights, our fisheries.
Let's take a look at that.**

The American Bird Conservancy has stated that the marine areas of Humboldt and Mendocino County are some of the most avian rich on the entire planet.

Does the fate of the world hinge on placing wind turbines in that exact same place, or could they be placed elsewhere?

Due to many factors, as of 2015, seabird abundance had already dropped by 69.7 % in just 60 years, which was noted in a paper published in PLOS ONE, coauthored by Edd Hammill of Utah State University.

Do we want to contribute to that in the very place where seabird life is so abundant?

Just because seabirds, such as the mighty albatross, shearwaters, and puffins are out of sight, are they also out of mind?

As noted by Ben Lascelles, a Senior Marine Officer with Birdlife International, “Most seabirds are long-lived and slow reproducing, this means even quite small increases in mortality can lead to significant population declines, which they take a long time to recover from.”

Are people willing to overlook years of concern for wildlife all of a sudden because of panic driven decision making?

Let’s at least try to be creative, and demand that our energy needs be met with an intellectually competitive process. We need solutions of the future. Not dreams from 1975.

Did we live to regret putting turbines in rivers which ate up our salmon?

Can we please quit trying to solve things with giant industrial solutions?

Isn’t that 20th century thinking? Isn’t that how we created a lot of problems in the first place?

This letter is not being written by some extremist. I realize that, while people have good intentions, they may not be thinking this through.

Sure, wind energy seems sexy and cool and clean, but what’s clean about putting one more hazard in the way of our ever shrinking seabird population, that people USED to care about until they didn’t?

Telling us they are putting the turbines at an altitude where birds aren’t flying etc. is just silly. I don’t have immediate answers for you folks, but once you wipe out the birds, and get to a minimal repopulation number, they aren’t coming back. If that happens you can just quit talking about the dams and the salmon, and live with the legacy you willingly created.

**Suzanne E. Atiyeh,
California Coastal National Monument Ambassador**



[Eureka, CA 95503](#)

S. E. A.