



# Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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## **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**July 11, 2023 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

Community Advisory Committee Chair Dennis Leonardi called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6:01 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The agenda for this meeting was posted on July 7, 2023.

#### **Members present:**

Norman Bell  
Elizabeth Burks  
Colin Fiske  
Larry Goldberg (arrived 6:33 p.m.)  
Christopher Honar  
Richard Johnson

Dennis Leonardi, Chair  
Kit Mann  
Emily Morris  
Jerome Qirazi  
Jeff Trirogoff

**Members absent:** Luna Latimer, Ethan Lawton

**Board Liaison, non-voting:** Kris Mobley (absent)

#### **Staff present:**

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director  
Lori Taketa, Board Clerk  
Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

#### **Non-Agenda Item Public Comment**

No member of the public commented. Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

#### **Consent Calendar**

**3.1. Approve May 9, 2023, CAC Meeting Minutes.**

**3.2. Accept Local Major Projects Subcommittee Update.**

Members requested the minutes be revised to reflect that a motion to advise the Board of Directors to exclude carbon-emitting Humboldt County energy sources from RCEA's renewable energy portfolio by 2030 was not made because this discussion item was not listed on the agenda, and that staff advised that this item could be placed on a future agenda to allow for required public notice. There was no public comment on the consent calendar items. Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

**Motion Fiske, Second Qiriazzi: Approve the consent calendar items with amendments to the May 9, 2023, CAC Meeting Minutes.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Ayes: Bell, Burks, Fiske, Honar, Johnson, Mann, Morris, Leonardi, Qiriazzi, Trirogoff. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Goldberg, Latimer, Lawton.**

**5. CAC Input on Humboldt Sawmill Company Annual Biomass Report**

Power Resources Director Engel described the Humboldt Sawmill Company annual biomass use report, the report's history and process, how it fulfills the RCEA-HSC Memorandum of Understanding adopted when the existing power purchase agreement was extended, and how information from these reports is meant to inform decisions on alternative biomass feedstock use. Annual report data as well as analysis and requests from the recently formed Biomass Technical Advisory Group (BTAG) were shared. Staff shared that HSC is investigating hydrogen energy production as a potential alternative biomass use, and that RCEA plans to collaborate with the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District on air pollution monitoring and data gathering in different locations around the county.

BTAG members requested more time to review HSC-provided data and more detailed descriptions of biomass source material. Staff will request HSC information be provided earlier to allow for more BTAG review time, organize an in-person BTAG meeting to discuss the annual HSC report, and provide the BTAG with more contextual information from the Air District to interpret the HSC data.

Chair Leonardi disclosed that he uses HSC fly ash as an organic soil amendment and for carbon sequestration on his dairy operation, a common local dairy farming practice.

Community Advisory Committee members expressed concerns about HSC's emissions data and air quality violations, requested information on how the violations were addressed by HSC to meet air quality standards, and suggested that BTAG indicate whether enough data was provided to inform alternate biomass use recommendations. Committee members also requested more detailed emissions data to be illustrated in graph form in the context of allowable limits to facilitate understanding, and that staff provide information on RCEA's procurement portfolio impacts should HSC no longer provide energy to RCEA. Committee members expressed a desire to discuss the following non-annual report topics: health and global warming impacts of the HSC biomass power plant's emissions and justification of RCEA's power purchase agreement with HSC in light of air quality and health concerns. Committee members requested a discussion on recommending an HSC power purchase sunset date to the Board at the next CAC meeting. Staff is engaging the Air District and County Health office to report on these expressed air quality concerns. Committee members requested an expanded discussion of HSC's emissions air quality health concerns with a panel that includes Dr. Wendy Ring.

BTAG member Dan Chandler, speaking on behalf of 350 Humboldt, Environmental Protection Information Center and Northcoast Environmental Center, provided a one-page

summary of HSC report comments, requested that a nationally recognized expert on biomass pollution's health impacts report to RCEA's Board, and asked that the Air Quality District provide a statement on any HSC pending violations.

BTAG member Clarke Stevenson of the Watershed Research and Training Center expressed concern regarding HSC's air quality impacts, requested a life cycle analysis that includes the extraction phase when comparing Humboldt Bay Generating Station natural gas and Humboldt Sawmill Company biomass energy, and suggested implementation of best available pollution-control technologies at HSC as a mid-term solution.

Southern Humboldt resident Bob Wiener requested air quality monitoring in areas close to the HSC biomass plant and extending outward, and comparison with Health Department data on cancer clusters.

Public health professional Wendy Ring, M.D., requested time at a CAC meeting to present findings on the Air Quality Management District's regulation enforcement and monitoring shortfalls.

Chair Leonardi closed the public comment period.

## **6. Humboldt's Electric Future Community Engagement Draft Final Report**

Power Resources Director Engel described the project to inform the community about RCEA's state- and Board-set procurement and planning obligations, and to gather community input on RCEA's power procurement in the context of these constraints. Director Engel presented the project's final report to the committee.

Workshop participants prioritized reducing greenhouse gas emissions in RCEA's power portfolio quickly and supported local renewable energy development. In contrast to the Board's direction to procure all energy locally by 2030, workshop participants generally deprioritized purchasing locally produced energy in favor of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing renewable energy procurement regardless of where it is produced. The sample procurement mix most favored by workshop participants produced the least greenhouse gas emissions but will require energy storage solutions in the long term and short-term procurement to fill energy generation gaps.

Staff will incorporate CAC comments into the final report which will be presented to the Board of Directors and published. The community input collected through this project will be included in the process of filing RCEA's 2024 Integrated Resource Plan statewide energy procurement planning report.

CAC members discussed:

- Making 24/7 renewable energy and fuel switching a procurement goal.
- The planned transmission grid upgrades' effect of lessening the perceived need for 100% local energy.
- The risk of all locally produced offshore wind energy being exported without

addressing local grid reliability needs, and the increased need to develop local renewable energy sources.

- The need to include a broader range of the community in outreach events and strategies for increasing participant outreach.
- The need to indicate whether electrification needs are included in reported loads.
- The need to clarify the term “no emissions” and what reducing emissions means, since the reported fuel sources create biogenic emissions.
- The desire to exclude HSC’s biomass energy from compliant energy sources due to health risks.

Southern Humboldt resident Bob Wiener supported using locally produced energy locally and recruiting more community participation from Rio Dell and areas most affected by the biomass plant.

Member of the public Martha Walden spoke and submitted written comment asking for more time to be allowed for input on Integrated Resource Plan decisions.

Member of the public Nancy Ihara supported ending HSC biomass energy procurement at the end of the current contract if not sooner and asked that the CAC make that recommendation to the RCEA Board.

Chair Leonardi closed the comment period.

#### **7. Critical Facilities Subcommittee Report**

Due to a lack of time, this item was not discussed at this meeting. The Chair requested that this item be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **8. Member and Board Liaison Reports**

The Chair noted that Board Liaison Mobley prepared a written report which is included in the agenda packet.

Chair Leonardi adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Lori Taketa  
Clerk of the Board