



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

633 3rd Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Phone: (707) 269-1700

Toll-Free (800) 931-7323

Fax: (707) 269-1777

E-mail: info@redwoodenergy.org

Web: www.redwoodenergy.org

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

March 12, 2024 - 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 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The agenda for this meeting was posted on March 1, 2024.

Members present:

Norman Bell

Elizabeth Burks (remote – just cause)

Deborah Dukes

Colin Fiske

Larry Goldberg

Christopher Honar

Luna Latimer (remote - Orleans, CA)

Ethan Lawton

Dennis Leonardi, Chair

Kit Mann

Emily Morris (remote – just cause)

Jerome Qiriazzi, Vice Chair

Jeff Trirogoff

Members absent: Richard Johnson

Board Liaison present: Kris Mobley (non-voting)

Staff present:

Ronnie Chaussé, Finance Specialist

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director

Matthew Marshall, Executive Director

Sally Regli, Account Services Manager

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

There were no comments on topics not listed on the agenda.

Consent Calendar

3.1. Approve February 13, 2024, CAC Special Meeting Minutes.

Neither committee members nor public participants requested discussion of any item.

Motion Goldberg, Second Lawton: Approve February 13, 2024, CAC special meeting minutes.

The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Goldberg, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann, Morris, Qiriazzi. Noes: None. Abstain: Burks, Honar, Trirogoff. Absent: Johnson.

5. Humboldt Sawmill Biomass Discussion

Chair Leonardi explained discussion ground rules and the intent to inform committee members of multiple perspectives so they can recommend an action to the Board.

Dr. Wendy Ring of the Humboldt Coalition for Clean Energy described how the Scotia biomass plant's emissions harm public and planetary health in the context of greenhouse gas emission tipping points which current trajectories show the planet crossing in less than 6 years. Dr. Ring described the HSC power plant's air quality violation history. Standards are based on maximum emissions control technology achievable by power plants, not health-based criteria. Dr. Ring asked RCEA to procure renewable energy from less expensive, cleaner sources.

RCEA Power Resources Director Richard Engel described RCEA's reasons for local biomass procurement since 2017 and agency efforts to address community concerns over that period. The RCEA Biomass Technical Advisory Group considered recent Scotia power plant violation concerns but could not agree on a recommended Board action. HSC biomass power helps RCEA meet state renewable energy and resource adequacy mandates and RCEA Board local clean energy procurement guidelines at a competitive price. The HSC contract was extended to fill the mandated procurement gap left by the failed Terra-Gen wind project, a local, renewable, utility scale power source.

Humboldt Sawmill Company's Executive Vice President of Operations Dean Kerstetter explained how the state regulates Humboldt Redwood Company's timberland management as part of its wildfire risk reduction efforts. Mr. Kerstetter described the power plant's role in generating both power and heat from unsellable lumber-making waste products to run the sawmill and lumber drying kiln. This system is the company's lowest-emission solution to address production and waste management. By early 2025 HSC will have invested \$15.5 million in power plant improvements since the facility's 2015 purchase. The power plant meets federal Clean Air Act Title V permit program requirements.

Yana Valachovic of UC Cooperative Extension for Humboldt and Del Norte Counties described biomass power plants' role in regional ecosystem management, carbon sequestration and wildfire risk management. Ms. Valachovic described the statewide scale of wildfire losses and advocated for a "yes, and" approach where biomass power is one of many methods to address the wildfires that have consumed one of every eight acres of forested California land in the last decade.

North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District Air Pollution Control Officer Brian Wilson described Humboldt Sawmill Company's monitoring technology, emissions testing measures, permit status, citizen complaint and violation history, and the Air District's notice of violation issuing method. Mr. Wilson described how the Scotia plant differs from other emission-producing biomass plants and the Air Quality Management District's role to monitor and enforce compliance with existing regulations and limitations. Mr. Wilson noted RCEA's role to determine HSC's contract compliance.

The committee members discussed the following with the presenters:

- Whether staying in a contract with HSC gives RCEA more influence on power plant operations.
- HSC would likely sell excess power and valuable resource adequacy attributes to PG&E and continue operation if RCEA terminated its contract.
- RCEA's need for biomass energy would decrease if more customers opted up to REpower+, RCEA's 100% renewable energy service. Only about 1% of RCEA customers have opted up so far.
- HSC produces 200 cubic yards of biochar per day from mill waste. The current market cannot accommodate more biochar production, which can sequester carbon for long periods and reduce criteria emissions to 1/10 of biomass power emissions.
- HSC contracted with a consulting firm to identify alternative sawmill waste uses. No commercial alternatives of adequate scale currently exist in the region. HSC will test an alternative biomass use in Mendocino first then in Humboldt.
- Wildfire emissions dwarf biomass plant emissions and have exceeded the state's CO2 reduction accomplishments.
- While for-profit corporations can focus solely on financial concerns, public agencies must consider broader needs such as health, equity and carbon emissions' social costs.
- The HSC plant uses best available control technologies. Other technologies to control smaller particles exist, but these measures are not required or regulated.
- RCEA's power portfolio manager, The Energy Authority, projected an additional \$50 million in costs through 2031 if RCEA terminated the HSC contract. Cost increase causes would be: finding and contracting new-construction solar plus storage projects; penalties for unmet state requirements and timelines; and very expensive short-term replacement resource adequacy, renewable certificates, and energy contracts. Cost increase impacts on RCEA's renewable goals, financial viability and customer rates were discussed.
- The region would benefit from constructing new facilities to manage its forest growth rates. New industrial projects are difficult to site and develop in California. Upgrading existing plants is more attractive and efficient as a result. The HSC plant's statewide generation efficiency rank was discussed.
- The need for 24/7 reliable, baseload power increases as more renewable but intermittent power flows into the grid, increasing HSC's baseload power capacity value. Other state energy planning policies encouraging biomass and other renewable energy development, such as BioMAT, were described. BioMAT could help pay for new technology power plants that run on biomass or dairy waste.
- HSC's power could be replaced by offshore wind power. Offshore wind power will not come online until the mid-2030's, after the 2031 HSC contract end.
- RCEA can end its contract with HSC if HSC does not comply with air quality laws on an ongoing basis. HSC may need to perform a health risk analysis to identify actual health impacts.
- Biomass power, like all power sources, has impacts. Impacts of all sources should be considered.

The following community members commented at the meeting:

Roberta Welty, Eureka resident, supported RCEA's continuation of the HSC contract to maintain a higher level of local regulation.

Mary Hurley, Eureka resident, opposed the HSC contract due to climate emergency tipping point impacts and favored cleaner energy sources.

Kristy Prescott, forest service social scientist, supported the HSC contract for biomass utilization and wildfire crisis mitigation, and alternate biomass use development. Ending the HSC contract could discourage other alternate biomass use investment in the area.

An unnamed member of public requested wide distribution of the air quality health risk analysis and information on how much capital is directed to biomass energy and other energy sources.

John Schaefer, Arcata resident, stated that it was unfair that four speakers were aligned in opinion against one speaker, opposed the biomass contract, supported near or onshore wind power and asked for stakeholders to work together on a solution.

Geoffrey Robinson, Blue Lake resident, disagreed with the statement that commercial logging mitigates wildfire risk and opposed RCEA helping the logging industry with its waste problem.

Eureka resident Cena Marino called for more stringent emissions standards to decrease atmospheric warming and volunteered to donate her solar true up refund to RCEA to lower carbon emissions.

Joann Kerns, Eureka resident, opposed the HSC contract because biomass is not clean energy, has health impacts and goes against RCEA's 100% clean and renewable energy by 2025 goal.

Martha Walden opposed carbon-intensive electricity due to externalized health and climate costs and supported more solar and battery storage procurement.

Stephen Paytash asked that RCEA promote its REpower+ service to increase customer participation and increase wind, solar and hydropower procurement.

Chris Lee, Westhaven resident and forest health specialist stated that 160 million trees died during California's 5-year drought and the state has too many trees in too little space. Forest residue processing infrastructure is connected to forest health.

Paul Harper, Arcata resident, spoke of the biomass plant's importance to the wood products industry, landowners of different scales for forest management, and wildfire risk reduction.

Jared Gerstein, Arcata resident and forester, spoke about the need for a functional

forest product sector and biomass plant to complement limited prescribed fire treatment ability. Mr. Gerstein stated that biomass energy is part of a reasonable solution.

Corinne Frugoni, physician and Humboldt Del Norte Medical Society member, opposed biomass incineration due to serious health problems from small particulate emissions. Dr. Frugoni cited poor Humboldt County asthma and cardiovascular disease statistics.

Michael Shapiro, Bayside resident, opposed biomass energy due to the too long carbon recovery time and short timeframe to mitigate climate change.

Mark André, Arcata resident and local forester, expressed support for RCEA procuring local biomass energy and a need for more biomass facilities on the North Coast to avoid mill waste transport emissions and costs.

Marla Weston, Eureka resident, stated that the Air District has more leverage to control HSC's actions than does RCEA and must hold HSC accountable for violations.

Chip Sharpe requested more information about opting up to RCEA's REpower+ 100% service. Mr. Sharp opposed biomass energy and supported more rooftop distributed solar with battery storage availability.

Mike Miles, Eureka resident and Humboldt Redwood Company Forestry Operations Director, supported the biomass plant contract and HSC's \$15.5 million power plant improvements. Mr. Miles expressed appreciation for the community holding HSC accountable and trust in California's stringent air quality standards and enforcement.

Jake Morris, Morris Logging Company owner, stated that HSC's biomass plant is cleaner than wildfires, plays a significant local green waste diversion role, and requested more local forest waste outlets. Mr. Morris stated that he owns the region's largest compost facility and the local customer base cannot support the volume of compost local green waste could produce.

Melodie Meyer of the Environmental Protection Information Center urged the CAC to recommend early HSC contract termination due to HSC's pattern of non-compliance. Ms. Meyer stated that the contract contradicts RCEA's policies and goals and tarnishes the agency's reputation.

Walt Paniak opposed biomass power due to cost relative to cleaner renewable energy sources and climate crisis concerns. Mr. Paniak submitted his calculations with his written comments.

Diane Ryerson, Arcata resident, opposed biomass due to the forest's inability to grow back quickly enough to prevent climate change impacts and opposed the statement that logging supports wildfire prevention. Ms. Ryerson supports distributed solar energy.

Randy Ganz, Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood Companies byproducts manager, pointed to negative impacts of trucking 18,000 semi truckloads of forest waste to other

locations each year and to negative impacts of all renewable energy sources. Mr. Ganz supports biomass energy as a local energy source from fuel grown in Forest Stewardship Council regulated local forests.

Caroline Griffith of the Northcoast Environmental Center opposed the HSC biomass contract and called for phasing out the power plant due to its high greenhouse gas emissions and lower efficiency compared to the gas-powered Humboldt Bay Generating Station. Ms. Griffith does not agree that commercial logging helps wildfire reduction.

Dan Close, Rainforest Action Group founder, opposed the HSC contract and pointed to climate change's role in creating hotter forest fires. Mr. Close stated the need for small-scale forest solutions and that RCEA is greenwashing biomass energy.

Ann Kilby, Kneeland resident, expressed gratitude for the divergent opinions expressed and observed that all opinions and abilities must work together to address rising global temperature tipping points.

Online participant George Rogers III, Chairman and CEO of the National E-Force, asked RCEA to partner with seven Native American tribes to pursue \$350 million in NTIA grants to develop a long-life, coal-based battery with a communications ability.

Susan Parsons thanked Wendy Ring for her leadership and reminded RCEA of its responsibility to protect public health. Ms. Parsons requested RCEA find new solutions.

Will Brieger, a retired environmental lawyer, opposed biomass combustion power and reliance on the Environmental Protection Agency and Air District to address the plant's problems.

Lynda McDevitt of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship opposed the HSC contract due to concerns that pollution and CO2 emissions undermine healthy and secure communities.

Julie Christie, Blue Lake resident, supported continuing the HSC contract, pointed to the lack of Rio Dell citizen health complaints, and expressed the need for existing and new local energy sources for self-sufficiency in the context of deteriorating grid infrastructure.

Daniel Chandler opposed the HSC contract due to carbon sequestration timing issues and imminent global warming climate disaster tipping points.

Ellen Golla called for ending the HSC biomass contract due to hazards to the community. Ms. Golla stated RCEA tarnishes its image by continuing the contract.

Carrie Peyton Dahlberg, Trinidad resident, asked RCEA to honor its mission by ending the HSC contract and to not be responsible for solving the timber industry's waste problem.

Ellen Taylor, Petrolia resident and Lost Coast League Chair, opposed the HSC contract and supported rooftop solar as a means of gaining autonomy.

Written comments opposing the HSC biomass contract were received from the following community members:

Andrea Armin	Kathryn Donahue	Jennifer Knight
Gisele Albertine	Gary Falxa	Craig Knox
Carolyn Ayres	Tina Garsen	Kristin Martinique
Helen Azevedo-Gale	Eric Grantz	Lynda McDevitt
Stacy Becker	Andrew Greer	Maria Mehegan
Petra Bingham	Catherine Hart	Sue Y. Lee Mossman
Barbara and John Brimlow	Patty Harvey	Juliet O'Barr
Olivia Brock	Carolyn Hawkins	Walt Paniak
Jennie Brown	Dorre Kidd Howard	Sue Parsons
Barbara Burns	Nancy Ihara	Gary Rees
Daniel Chandler	Jessica	Geoffrey Robinson
Suzanne Cook	Colleen Kandus	Diane Ryerson
Gail Coonen	Rena Kaminsky	Richard Salzman
Lee Dedini	Pat Kanzler	Steve Salzman
Marc Delany	Kathleen Kelcey	Emily Siegel
Joan Dixon	Joyce King	

The following groups are members of the Humboldt Coalition for Clean Energy, which submitted a comment letter:

350 Humboldt	Lost Coast League
Humboldt Unitarian Climate Action Campaign	Sierra Club Redwoods North Group
EPIC	Friends of the Eel River
Northcoast Environmental Center	Humboldt Green Party
Women's Intl League for Peace & Freedom-Humboldt	Humboldt Democratic Central Committee
Humboldt Health Care for All	Humboldt Progressive Democrats
Buddhist Peace Fellowship	Climate Health Now
HOPE Coalition	CA Alliance for Retired Americans-North State
Redwood Alliance	CA Nurses for Environmental Health & Justice

Matthew Simmons, EPIC Climate Attorney (submitted by Wendy Ring and Melodie Meyer)

Jason Davis, NCUAQMD Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer (submitted by Wendy Ring and Melodie Meyer)

Howard Hughes, EHS Compliance Specialist (submitted by Wendy Ring and Melodie Meyer)

Written comment in support of RCEA's contract with RCEA was received from the following community members:

Les A. Charter	Charity Marcelli
Teresa Davis	Rob McBeth, O & M Industries
Michael Furniss	Kris Payne
Treasure Hunt	

The Community Advisory Committee Charter requires a 2/3 vote of the full committee (10 votes) if there is significant disagreement over a recommendation.

Motion Qiriaz, Second Fiske: Recommend that the RCEA Board exits the contract with Humboldt Sawmill Company as soon as a viable long term replacement contract can be negotiated that allows RCEA to meet its compliance requirements.

The motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Dukes, Fiske, Honar, Morris, Qiriaz. Noes: Burks, Goldberg, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann. Abstain: Bell, Trirogoff. Absent: Johnson.

Motion Bell, Second Trirogoff: Recommend the RCEA Board terminate the contract with Humboldt Sawmill Company in three years unless HSC can eliminate greenhouse gas production in the process.

The motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Morris, Trirogoff. Noes: Burks, Goldberg, Honar, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann. Abstain: Qiriaz. Absent: Johnson.

Staff will provide the Board with a summary of the different points of view presented at this meeting. Chair Leonardi, Vice Chair Qiriaz, and members Lawton and Honar volunteered to serve on an ad hoc committee to review the summary before presentation to the Board.

Motion Trirogoff, Second Bell: Call a special meeting of the Community Advisory Committee within 72 hours to entertain George Roger's proposal to obtain \$350 million for battery storage development.

The motion failed with the following vote: Ayes: Bell, Trirogoff. Noes: Burks, Dukes, Fiske, Goldberg, Honar, Latimer, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann, Morris, Qiriaz. Abstain: None. Absent: Johnson.

6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Marshall reported his impending departure from RCEA at the end of the month. Member Lawton thanked staff.

Chair Leonardi adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board