

**RFI-24-402**  
**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**  
**FOR**  
**CAISO QUEUE CLUSTER 15 RESOURCES**



**Redwood Coast Energy Authority**  
**[www.RedwoodEnergy.org](http://www.RedwoodEnergy.org)**

Issuance: October 2, 2024

Responses Due: October 25, 2024 by 5:00pm PPT

to

**[procurement@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:procurement@redwoodenergy.org)**

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# 1 BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

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Redwood Coast Energy Authority (“RCEA”) is a local government Joint Powers Authority founded in 2003 whose members include the Blue Lake Rancheria, the Yurok Tribe, the County of Humboldt, the Cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. RCEA develops and implements sustainable energy initiatives that reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency, and advance the use of clean, efficient and renewable resources. RCEA has been providing electric power generation service to its member jurisdictions as a community choice aggregator (“CCA”) since 2017, and thus is subject to the legislative, regulatory and market requirements imposed on load serving entities (“LSE”) within the state of California.

RCEA’s Board of Directors has set a goal to procure 100% carbon-free and renewable energy on an annual basis by 2026. Additionally, RCEA’s RePower Comprehensive Action Plan for Energy<sup>1</sup> (“Strategic Plan”) calls for the development of new power resources within RCEA’s service area to achieve 100% local renewable energy by 2030. Pursuant to its Strategic Plan, RCEA strives to source as much of its power procurement from local projects as possible.

Through its Interconnection Process Enhancements Track 2 stakeholder process, the California Independent System Operator (“CAISO”) is planning to implement major reforms to its interconnection queue cluster study process, pending approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The reforms are intended to reduce the number of non-viable projects in the interconnection queue and are expected to be implemented starting with Interconnection Queue Cluster 15 (“Cluster 15 Process”). Among the reforms is a scoring system that determines whether projects advance in the interconnection study process based on commercial interest, project viability, and system need. This scoring system allows LSEs, like RCEA, to express interest in specific projects by awarding them capacity that CAISO allocates to LSEs for commercial interest (“Commercial Interest Capacity”).

RCEA seeks information from qualified respondents for projects under development that 1) are requesting interconnection in the Cluster 15 Process, 2) have not yet received any Commercial Interest Capacity or need additional such capacity for their project to proceed in the interconnection process, and 3) can deliver renewable energy and flexible capacity to the grid in furtherance of RCEA’s contribution to California’s clean energy and reliability goals, as well as RCEA’s own Board-adopted goals, as described above. Respondents are asked to provide complete responses per the guidelines below. The results of this RFI may be used in whole or in part to determine how RCEA allocates its Commercial Interest Capacity to projects in the Cluster 15 Process.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://redwoodenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RePower-2019-Update-FINAL-.pdf>

## 2 ELIGIBILITY SPECIFICATIONS

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### 2.1 MANDATORY CRITERIA

To be eligible for consideration under this RFI, responses must meet the following requirements:

**Interconnection**: The project is requesting interconnection in CAISO's Cluster 15 Process.

**Site Control**: The project has secured at least 90% site control.

**Technology Type**: The project is categorized as one of the following resource types.

- i. PCC1 RPS-eligible generation;
- ii. PCC1 RPS-eligible generation paired with energy storage;
- iii. Standalone energy storage; or
- iv. Large hydropower carbon-free generation.

### 2.2 PREFERRED CRITERIA

**Deliverability**: RCEA prefers projects that are located in zones with Transmission Plan Deliverability capacity, are interconnecting at points with sufficient TPD capacity to accommodate the project, and that are seeking Full Capacity Deliverability Status (FCDS) in their interconnection process. Energy-only projects are eligible for this RFI, but are not preferred.

**Size**: RCEA serves an annual energy load of approximately 600 GWh and a peak demand of approximately 85 MW in the summer and 100 MW in the winter. Respondents are encouraged to scale their responses appropriately given RCEA's size, and to provide indicative commercial terms for multiple offtake capacities.

**Location**: RCEA's descending order of locational preference is as follows.

1. Humboldt Local Capacity Area
2. Trinity, Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Lake, Mendocino or Sonoma Counties
3. Elsewhere in CAISO

## 3 SUBMISSION DETAILS

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### 3.1 RESPONSE SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Responses to this RFI are due by 5:00 p.m. PDT via email to **[procurement@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:procurement@redwoodenergy.org)**. The subject line of the email accompanying the response should include the phrase "RCEA 2024 QC-15 RFI". RCEA encourages respondents to be clear and concise in their responses, while still providing enough detail for the review team to adequately evaluate the response.

### 3.2 SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS

The documents accompanying this solicitation protocol are as follows and are posted on RCEA's contracting opportunities webpage: <https://redwoodenergy.org/contracting/>.

Respondents are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and being fully aware of the terms of this solicitation, including each appendix.

- Appendix A Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) Form
- Appendix B Project Details Form
- Appendix C Indicative Pricing Form
- Appendix D Commercial Interest Exclusivity Agreement (not to be submitted with response – see Section 5.3)

### 3.3 SUBMISSION MATERIALS

Responses will be deemed complete if they include the following materials and are responsive to the instructions below. Submittals will be deemed conforming if they adhere to the mandatory criteria described in Section 2.1.

- ✓ SOQ Form in PDF or Word format (Appendix A)
- ✓ Project Details Form in PDF or Word format (Appendix B)
- ✓ Indicative Pricing Form in Excel format (Appendix C)
- ✓ Project maps in PDF format

#### **Statement of Qualifications Form**

Respondents are required to submit a statement of qualifications substantially in the form of Appendix A. The respondent can use their own letterhead or standard template but must respond to all prompts in the order shown in the SOQ Form. Only submit one SOQ Form even if multiple projects are being submitted.

#### **Project Details Form**

Respondents are required to submit qualitative information about the submitted project(s) substantially in the form of Appendix B. The respondent can use their own letterhead or standard template but must respond to all prompts in the order shown in the Project Details Form. Please submit a separate Project Details Form for each project. If multiple unique responses are being submitted for the same facility (e.g. different term lengths or different MW capacities), only submit one Project Details Form for that project.

#### **Indicative Pricing Form**

RCEA understands that respondents will not be able to offer binding pricing in advance of receiving interconnection studies for their projects, and thus is seeking indicative pricing and commercial terms based on respondents' best estimates at the time of responding to this RFI. Then, respondents will have the opportunity to submit an updated offer to RCEA with revised pricing at a later date that will be binding, according to the process set forth in Section 5.3 and Appendix D.

Respondents are required to submit a single Indicative Pricing Form using the template provided as Appendix C for all projects being submitted for consideration. Follow the instructions in the Indicative Pricing Form and ensure that all required cells are filled in. If providing multiple responses, do not submit a separate Indicative Pricing Form for each individual project or unique configuration of terms. The instructions included in the template specify how multiple unique responses are to be submitted within one Pricing Form.

## **Project Map**

Respondents are required to submit a map of each project they are submitting for consideration showing the site location and key project facilities. The map should include the project boundary, street names or highway names, latitude/longitude, and generation interconnect route from the facility to the first point of interconnection to the electric grid. The project boundaries should reflect the most recent information available.

### **3.4 SUPPLIER DIVERSITY AND LABOR PRACTICES**

Consistent with the California Public Utilities Code and California Public Utilities Commission policy objectives, RCEA collects information regarding supplier diversity and labor practices from project developers and their subcontractors regarding past, current and/or planned efforts and policies. Respondents that are women, minority, LGBT, and disabled veteran-owned businesses are encouraged to apply for certification by the CPUC's Supplier Diversity Clearinghouse Program<sup>2</sup>. This certification is voluntary and will not be used as a criterion for evaluation. As required by law in California, RCEA as a public agency does not give preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin; providing such information as part of the response package will not impact the selection process or good standing of executed contracts.

### **3.5 PUBLIC NATURE OF RESPONSES**

All responses to this RFI, as well as records of pre- and post-submittal communications with RCEA, will become the exclusive property of RCEA, subject to disclosure in accordance with the California Public Records Act (Cal. Government Code section 6250 et seq.). Respondents should limit submission of information or documents that they consider proprietary and that they would not want publicly disclosed and should clearly mark such information or documents as confidential. RCEA will consider limited requests for confidentiality on a case-by-case basis, provided that such requests are made at the time of response submission. All responses will be kept confidential until the RFI evaluation has concluded.

### **3.6 QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SOLICITATION**

All questions from potential respondents must be emailed to [procurement@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:procurement@redwoodenergy.org). The subject line of the email should include the phrase "RCEA 2024 QC-15 RFI Questions." Q&A responding to the questions received will be posted on the RCEA website by the deadline listed in the schedule. RCEA reserves the right to respond to no questions or only a subset of the questions received, or to provide consolidated responses to duplicative questions. RCEA will not hold a respondents' webinar so written questions are the only method of obtaining clarifications regarding the RFI. It is incumbent on the respondent to understand how to provide the required information relevant to their project(s) in advance of the response deadline such that their submittal package is complete and conforming.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thesupplierclearinghouse.com/>

## 4 SCHEDULE

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The following schedule is subject to change at any time during the solicitation process at the discretion of RCEA. Communications regarding schedule changes will be posted on RCEA's website.

Step	Date
Issuance of RFI	October 2, 2024
Questions due	October 9, 2024
Q&A posted on RCEA website	October 16, 2024
Responses due	October 25, 2024 5:00pm PPT
Evaluation of responses complete and respondents notified	November 22, 2024
Exclusivity Agreement(s) executed and Reservation Deposit(s) posted	November 29, 2024

RCEA will post Q&A and any addenda on its website: <https://redwoodenergy.org/contracting/>

## 5 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

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An evaluation committee made up of RCEA staff and consultants will review responses to this RFI. In accordance with the following process, each response will be screened for completeness and scored on a weighted criteria basis.

### 5.1 CONFORMITY REVIEW

Responses will initially be screened by RCEA staff for timely submission, and for completeness and conformity with the mandatory criteria stated in Section 2.1 and the submittal requirements in Section 3. This screening will be on a pass/fail basis and incomplete or non-conforming responses may be rejected at RCEA's discretion. Selected responses will then be provided to the evaluation committee for review.

### 5.2 RESPONSE SCORING

Evaluation will be based on, but not limited to, the weighted scoring criteria listed below. Responses will be scored by each member of the evaluation committee on a scale of zero to five in each criterion with a five being the best score. A response's total points will be calculated according to each criterion's weight below and the average score assigned by the evaluation committee, out of a maximum of 100 points. One or more of the highest scoring responses may be selected for allocation of all or a portion of RCEA's Commercial Interest Capacity, at RCEA's discretion.

#### **Weighted Scoring Criteria**

- 40 – Development risk including interconnection, permitting, and financing
- 20 – Overall price, portfolio fit, market value and compliance value
- 20 – Respondent experience, qualifications, creditworthiness
- 10 – Site-specific environmental impact
- 10 – Location (see section 2.2) and community benefit

### 5.3 COMMERCIAL INTEREST CAPACITY AWARD

Following the evaluation process, all respondents will be notified whether or not their project has been selected for award of RCEA's Commercial Interest Capacity. At that time, successful respondents will be required to sign RCEA's Commercial Interest Exclusivity Agreement (Appendix D), and within five (5) business days of execution submit a deposit in the amount of five dollars (\$5.00) per kW-AC of Commercial Interest Capacity to be awarded ("Reservation Deposit"). Substantive changes to the Commercial Interest Exclusivity Agreement will not be considered by RCEA.

The Reservation Deposit is intended to secure the project capacity through the interconnection study process until the respondent has enough certainty of its interconnection costs to submit a binding offer to RCEA and contract based on the offered commercial terms. The Reservation Deposit must be in the form of cash, and the respondent is solely responsible for the cost of providing and maintaining such deposit until the Exclusivity Deadline, as defined in Appendix D. Please refer to Appendix D for additional details regarding the Reservation Deposit including circumstances under which it will be returned or forfeited.

Following execution of a Commercial Interest Exclusivity Agreement, RCEA will award Commercial Interest Capacity to the associated project capacity in the Cluster 15 Process. Once the project has received its Cluster Reassessment & Restudy results from CAISO, the respondent will be expected to submit revised pricing and terms ("Binding Offer") to RCEA's next power procurement solicitation ("Subsequent RFO"). RCEA shall notify the respondent upon issuance of the Subsequent RFO and details regarding how to submit the Binding Offer will be included in the associated RFO protocol. The Binding Offer will be evaluated alongside other offers submitted in the Subsequent RFO, according to the terms and conditions set forth in the associated RFO protocol. If the Binding Offer is shortlisted in the Subsequent RFO, RCEA will seek to negotiate a purchase agreement for offtake of the project or a portion thereof.

RCEA is a member of California Community Power ("CC Power"). On August 19, 2024, CC Power issued a solicitation for long-term renewable power and storage ("CCP RFP"). RCEA may award Commercial Interest Capacity to Cluster 15 projects that submit bids to CC Power and enter into exclusivity with CC Power in accordance with the requirements of the CCP RFP. RCEA will determine whether to award Commercial Interest Capacity to Cluster 15 projects bid into the CCP RFP using the evaluation criteria in this RFI, as described in Sections 2.1 and 5.2.

### 5.4 RESPONDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Questions, comments or feedback associated with this RFI must be sent electronically to [procurement@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:procurement@redwoodenergy.org). The subject line of the email should include the phrase "RCEA 2024 QC-15 RFI Questions." RCEA will not respond by other means to questions from respondents or prospective respondents on or before the submission due date. RCEA does not plan to interview respondents as part of this RFI, but reserves the right to conduct interviews following evaluation of the responses to clarify or obtain additional information.



## 5.5 DISCLAIMERS

By participating in RCEA's RFI process, a respondent acknowledges that it has read, understands, and agrees to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFI protocol contained herein. RCEA reserves the right to reject any response that does not comply with the requirements identified herein, or to waive irregularities, if any in selecting a non-conforming response. RCEA further reserves the right to communicate with individual respondents to ask clarifying questions about their responses prior to determining whether to select a response for award of Commercial Interest Capacity. RCEA has no obligation and makes no commitment to (i) enter into a transaction with any respondent or (ii) be bound by any term proposed by the respondent. Furthermore, RCEA may, at its sole discretion and without notice, modify, suspend, or terminate the RFI without liability to any organization or individual. Such modification or termination shall be made in the form of addenda to this solicitation posted on RCEA's website. This RFI does not constitute an offer to buy any products or create an obligation for RCEA to enter into an agreement with any party. RCEA shall not be responsible for any of the respondent's costs incurred to prepare or submit a response, or for any other activity related to meeting the requirements established in this solicitation. All submittals shall become the property of RCEA and will not be returned.

The results of this RFI and the information provided therein may be shared by RCEA with other LSEs, but only with prior written approval from respondents whose responses RCEA wishes to share