



# REDWOOD COAST EnergyAuthority

Arcata | Blue Lake | Blue Lake Rancheria | County of Humboldt | Eureka | Ferndale | Fortuna | Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District | Rio Dell | Trinidad | Yurok Tribe

## **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Jefferson Community Center Auditorium  
1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501**

**January 13, 2026  
Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

Anyone needing special accommodation to participate in this meeting or access the meeting materials should email [LTaketa@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:LTaketa@redwoodenergy.org) or call (707) 269-1700 at least 3 business days before the meeting. Assistive listening devices are available.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, all writings or documents relating to any item on this agenda which have been provided to a majority of the Community Advisory Committee, including those received less than 72 hours prior to the Committee's meeting, will be made available to the public at [www.RedwoodEnergy.org](http://www.RedwoodEnergy.org).

NOTE: Speakers wishing to distribute materials to the Committee at the meeting, please provide 17 copies to the Board Clerk.

### **THIS IS A HYBRID IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL MEETING.**

As a courtesy, the public may participate remotely through the Zoom platform. RCEA cannot guarantee uninterrupted teleconference access. When technical difficulties arise, the meeting will continue unless otherwise required by law, such as when a committee member attends the meeting remotely pursuant to certain Brown Act provisions. The only ways to guarantee that the CAC receives your comment are to attend the meeting in person or submit your comment in writing before the meeting.

**To participate in the meeting by phone**, call (669) 900-6833. Enter webinar ID: 822 2338 1610. **To participate online**, log in at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82223381610>.

**To comment by phone or online during the public comment periods**, raise your hand in the Zoom webinar, or press star (\*) 9 on your phone. When it is your turn to speak, a staff member will ask you to unmute your phone or computer. You will have 3 minutes to speak.

**Email written comments** to [PublicComment@redwoodenergy.org](mailto:PublicComment@redwoodenergy.org). Identify the agenda item number in the subject line. Comments will be included in the meeting record but not read aloud during the meeting.

## **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING AGENDA**

Agenda Item / What	How / Action <u>Underlined actions</u> indicate that a vote is needed.	When
1. Open	<u>Roll Call:</u> Norman Bell                      Luna Latimer Deborah Dukes                  Ethan Lawton Colin Fiske                        Dennis Leonardi Benjamin Fordham              Kit Mann Richard Johnson                Pliny McCovey  Sarah Schaefer, Board Liaison  <b>Review meeting agenda and goals.</b>	6-6:05 p.m. (5 min.)
2. Non-Agenda Item Public Comment	This item is provided for the public to address the Committee on matters not on the agenda. At the end of public comments, the Committee may respond to statements, or refer requests requiring action to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.	6:05 – 6:10 p.m. (5 min.)
3. Consent Calendar	All matters on the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine by the CAC and are enacted in one motion. There is no separate discussion of any of these items. If discussion is required, that item is removed from the Consent Calendar and considered separately. At the end of the reading of the Consent Calendar, CAC members or members of the public can request that an item be removed for separate discussion.  <b>Actions:</b>  <b>3.1. <u>Approve September 9, 2025, CAC Meeting Minutes.</u></b>  <b>3.2. <u>Accept Local Major Projects Staff Notification List – None as of Agenda Publication.</u></b>  <b>3.3. <u>Adopt 2026 CAC Annual Meeting Calendar.</u></b>	6:10 – 6:15 p.m. (5 min.)

<b>Agenda Item / What</b>	<b>How / Action</b> <u>Underlined actions</u> indicate that a vote is needed.	<b>When</b>
4. Items Removed from Consent Calendar	This time is set aside for discussion of items removed from the Consent Calendar.	6:15 – 6:20 p.m. (5 min.)
5. Executive Director's Report	<b>Action:</b> Hear Executive Director's update.	6:20 – 6:30 p.m. (10 min.)
6. 2026 RCEA Policy Platform	<b>Action:</b> Provide input on draft 2026 RCEA Policy Platform updates.	6:30 – 6:45 p.m. (15 min.)
7. NREN Status, 2028-2031 Business Plan	<b>Action:</b> Receive an update on the Northern Rural Energy Network program rollout and the 2028-2031 Business Plan. (Information only)	6:45 – 6:55 p.m. (10 min.)
8. Sandrini Battery Storage Project Community Benefits	<b>Action:</b> Provide specific recommendations for the RCEA Board on use of the \$250,000 Community Investment Fund to be provided by EDPR per the terms of their Sandrini Energy Storage Service Agreement with RCEA.	6:55 – 7:25 p.m. (30 min.)
9. Member and Board Liaison Reports	This time is provided for Committee members and the Board Liaison to share information on topics not on the agenda. At the end of member reports, the Executive Director will set requests requiring action to a future agenda or refer requests to staff or the Board.  <b>9.1.</b> Board Liaison  <b>9.2.</b> Committee Members	7:25 – 7:30 p.m. (5 min.)
10. Close & Adjourn		7:30 p.m.

**NEXT REGULAR CAC MEETING** – Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 6 - 7:30 p.m.  
Jefferson Community Center Auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

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# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 1

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	RCEA Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director
<b>Subject</b>	Member Teleconference Participation

## Background

The California legislature revised the state's open meeting laws, or the Brown Act, in response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency which ended in early 2023. Since the pandemic, the Brown Act has been amended to codify modern teleconference meeting practices. SB 707 (Durazo, 2025) sets out the latest Brown Act revisions.

## Summary

Beginning January 1, 2026, CAC members may attend up to two meetings per year from a remote location without making the location accessible to the public for "just cause," as defined below:

1. Childcare or caregiving to child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, domestic partner; or
2. Contagious illness that prevents in person attendance; or
3. Mental or physical need not subject to reasonable accommodation provisions; or
4. Travel while on official business of RCEA or another state or local agency; or
5. Immunocompromised child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner that requires remote participation; or
6. Physical or family medical emergency; or
7. Military service obligations. "Emergency circumstance" due to a physical or family medical emergency that prevents the member from attending in person.

A vote is not necessary for a member to attend remotely for just cause, but the following requirements must be fulfilled:

1. At the beginning of the meeting, the remotely participating CAC member provides a brief description of the just cause reason, protecting the member's (or family member's) medical privacy;
2. Meeting minutes reflect the specific just cause reason;
3. Member participates through audio and visual means, unless a physical condition results in the member's need to participate off camera;
4. Member discloses individuals 18 years or older present in the room, and the general nature of their relationship with the CAC member;



## REDWOOD COAST Energy Authority

5. At least a quorum of the CAC must participate from one or more physical locations within Humboldt County that are publicly accessible and noticed on the meeting agenda;
6. If disruption in teleconference service occurs, the meeting must be discontinued until teleconference service is restored;
7. Votes are conducted by roll call; and
8. Member may participate remotely due to just cause up to two times per year.

If the CAC member needs to participate remotely for more than 2 meetings per year or for non-just cause reasons, staff recommends arranging for a publicly and ADA-accessible space with visual and audio meeting capabilities from which to participate in keeping with pre-COVID Brown Act teleconference meeting requirements.

Staff asks to be notified one-week in advance of remote meeting attendance so the member's publicly and ADA accessible remote meeting address can be published in the agenda, as may be required by the Brown Act.

In addition to expanded "just cause" teleconference meeting participation guidelines, SB 707 codified reasonable accommodation measures for CAC members with physical or mental disabilities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Members living with these disabilities may participate remotely from non-public locations. Their participation will be treated as in-person attendance at the physical meeting location, including for quorum purposes. Reasonable accommodation participation requires the following:

1. CAC member must use audio and visual technology, unless their physical condition results in needing to participate off camera; and
2. Member must disclose individuals 18 years old or older present in the room and disclose the general nature of their relationship to the member.

These reasonable accommodation requirements supersede all other teleconferencing requirements.

### **Alignment with RCEA's Strategic Plan**

N/A - Compliance with the Brown Act is a transparency requirement for California local public agencies.

### **Equity Impacts**

SB 707 author Senator Maria Elena Durazo stated an intention for the bill to increase public meeting participation. The bill's measures increase civic engagement opportunities for people facing barriers due to disability and distance from meeting locations by using technology that was widely adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Financial Impact**

Procurement and staff time related to complying with Brown Act requirements are included in the current fiscal year budget.



## Staff Recommendation

None.

## Attachments

- [Link to the Ralph M. Brown Act](#)<sup>1</sup>, California Government Code Sections 54950 - 54963, revised October 3, 2025.
- RCEA's public meeting location list:

Body	Date	Time	Location
Board of Directors	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month	3:30 p.m.	Wharfinger Building Bay Room, 1 Marina Way, Eureka, CA 95501
Community Advisory Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of odd-numbered months	6 p.m.	Jefferson Community Center Auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501
Finance Committee	As needed, dates TBD	TBD	RCEA Offices, 633 Third Street, Eureka, CA 95501

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<sup>1</sup> [California Code, GOV 54950.5.](#):

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54950.&nodeTreePath=6.2.1.22&lawCode=GOV](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54950.&nodeTreePath=6.2.1.22&lawCode=GOV)

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## Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Draft Meeting Minutes

Jefferson Community Center Auditorium  
1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Tuesday, September 9 2025  
6:00 PM

### Attendance

#### Members Present

Norman Bell, Deborah Dukes, Colin Fiske, Benjamin Fordham, Richard Johnson, Chair Ethan Lawton, Vice Chair Dennis Leonardi

#### Board Liaison Present

Sarah Schaefer

#### Members Absent

Luna Latimer, Kit Mann, Pliny McCovey

#### Board-Nominee Vacancies

Blue Lake Rancheria, Humboldt County (southern), Rio Dell, Yurok Tribe

#### Staff Present

IT Technician Ken Beals, Executive Director Elizabeth Burks, Power Resources Director Richard Engel, Board Clerk Lori Taketa

### Open Session (Call to Order)

#### Open

Chair Ethan Lawton called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6 p.m. at the location listed above. The meeting agenda was posted on September 5, 2025.

#### Consent Calendar

- 3.1. Approve May 13, 2025, CAC Meeting Minutes.
- 3.2. Accept Local Major Projects Staff Notification List – None as of Agenda Publication.

There were no requests from the CAC membership or public for discussion of either item.

**Motion Johnson, Second Leonardi: Approve Consent Calendar items.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Fordham, Johnson, Lawton, Leonardi. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Latimer, Mann, McCovey.**

## **Input on RCEA's Next Integrated Resource Plan**

Power Resources Director Engel described the new state deadline for submitting RCEA's electricity procurement plans through 2035. Political, market and internal policy conditions have changed since RCEA last gathered community procurement planning input through the 2023 Humboldt's Electric Future (HEF) process. Staff explained the need to also include projected electricity resource build-out and regulatory constraints in procurement decision-making. Staff asked for committee input on how to fill the gap between RCEA's current long-term contracts and RCEA's customers' projected electricity needs.

Various committee members expressed the following:

- Keep RCEA's greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Forego pursuing the cheapest energy in favor of providing the greatest savings to customers who need it the most.
- Follow the Strategic Plan's transition away from biomass energy from direct combustion. Do not extend the HSC biomass contract beyond 2031.
- Consider existing large hydropower if the price is reasonable.
- Consider solar + storage as a low-cost clean, firm energy source.
- Focus on cost for procurement planning.
- Identify new renewable energy development hurdles and how RCEA can help streamline processes.

The following prioritizing strategies were suggested:

- Prioritize procurement based on emission profiles.
- Prioritize based on agency and mission survival, community values, market realities and meeting customer needs.

Matt Simmons submitted public comment on behalf of the Environmental Protection Information Center opposing the inclusion of Humboldt Sawmill Company biomass energy after 2031, and any additional biomass, in RCEA's Integrated Resource Plan resource list.

Dr. Wendy Ring opposed inclusion of Humboldt Sawmill Company biomass energy in RCEA's Integrated Resource Plan due to the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve local air quality.

Chair Lawton closed the public comment period.

## **Annual Report on Humboldt Sawmill Company Biomass Use**

Power Resources Director Engel reported on Humboldt Sawmill Company's (HSC) annual data production as agreed upon in a memorandum of understanding between HSC and RCEA. The data was presented to the Biomass Technical Advisory Group (BTAG) and Director Engel presented a summary of that group's discussion as well as the data HSC produced to the committee.

The committee members discussed how HSC's aging biomass plant's relative inefficiency should be factored into future procurement planning, the need to pay attention to some BTAG members' concerns about inadequate air quality monitoring equipment, and what RCEA's role is if there are concerns that the Air Quality Management District is not taking adequate action to address air quality violations. Staff clarified that RCEA engages with the Air Quality Management District, which participates in the BTAG. The Air District and HSC are working through reported violations following standard protocols and RCEA does not find HSC to be out of compliance with their contract. The widely used Purple Air monitors were provided by the Air District. A committee member pointed out that committee and RCEA staff engagement with HSC has positively resulted in: bringing diverse and opposing stakeholders together in the BTAG to discuss concerns; more HSC plant data availability; and a recent, faster Air District approval process for modern equipment installation at the power plant. Based on an alternative biomass use consultant's study, HSC is considering developing a Ukiah BioMAT cogeneration plant to help power a biomass to hydrogen plant.

Dr. Wendy Ring cited unresolved regulatory issues at the Humboldt Sawmill Company biomass plant and urged local action to enforce the federal Clean Air Act in Humboldt County.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Burks outlined renewable energy incentives that the federal government is terminating. RCEA participated in 350 Humboldt's well-attended event about these incentives. RCEA continues to offer rebates to help residents purchase electric vehicles, and the Northern Rural Energy Network's (NREN) residential energy efficiency rebates are being launched locally and across 16 other rural counties in Northern California. RCEA will offer local businesses more energy saving incentives in the new year. The federal government canceled the Humboldt Harbor District's port development grant, but the state budget will fund studies to help the project move forward, as well as funding for the CADEMO pilot offshore wind project. The RCEA Board will consider how to engage in federal government lobbying.

## **Member and Board Liaison Reports**

Member Johnson asked staff to inform the CAC on Board responses to CAC recommendations and input. Member Bell asked to hear from wave and tidal energy developers about how much it would cost and how long it would take to develop Humboldt's resources to commercial readiness.

## **Close & Adjourn**

Chair Lawton adjourned the meeting at 8 p.m.

Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board

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# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 3.2

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	RCEA Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director
<b>Subject</b>	Local Major Projects of Interest

## Summary

The CAC requested a standing agenda item to discuss local major projects and activities that may have significant impact on RCEA's ability to reach energy goals outlined in the RePower Humboldt Comprehensive Action Plan for Energy. If staff agrees that a project is within RCEA's scope, staff will engage with project developers in early stages or a project-specific CAC ad hoc subcommittee will be formed to develop comments to present to the Board, if the project is in the public comment phase.

The Board clarified guidelines and a process for the CAC to discuss local major projects as follows:

1. If CAC members see a need to comment on or engage with a local project in development in ways that are within RCEA's scope, they notify the RCEA Executive Director.
2. If staff agrees that engaging with project developers is appropriate for RCEA, then staff will follow up or request volunteers for an ad hoc CAC Major Projects Subcommittee specific to a particular project for assistance in drafting comments.
3. If it is unclear whether engagement falls within RCEA's scope, staff will ask the Board for direction.
4. It is more productive for RCEA to engage and provide input early in the development process, rather than when the project is soliciting public comment (e.g. RCEA provided the County with technical input related to Nordic Aquafarms prior to the solicitation for public comments).
5. If RCEA has not been invited to provide input and RePower strategies are not accounted for in project plans, then it is appropriate for RCEA to comment during the public comment phase.

As of the writing of this staff report, there have been no new local major projects identified for the CAC to discuss at this meeting. However, if a CAC member identifies a project they would like to discuss and states how it relates to RCEA's strategic plan goals, this agenda item may be removed from the consent calendar for discussion.

## Staff Recommendation

Accept Local Major Projects Staff Notification List – None as of agenda publication.

## Attachments

None.

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# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 3.3

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Lori Taketa, Board Clerk
<b>Subject</b>	2026 CAC Meeting Calendar

## Summary

The RCEA Community Advisory Committee decided to meet every other month for 90 minutes beginning in January 2021 to give staff timely opportunities to solicit committee input and to allow time for member-requested agenda items. The committee meets on the second Tuesday of each odd-numbered month at 6 p.m. The proposed 2026 meeting calendar follows this meeting schedule.

## Alignment with RCEA's Strategic Plan

N/A - Adoption of the CAC's annual meeting calendar is an administrative function.

## Equity Impacts

N/A - Adoption of the CAC's annual meeting calendar is an administrative action.

## Financial Impact

RCEA's current fiscal year budget includes funding for staff support for Community Advisory Committee meetings and activities.

## Staff Recommendation

Approve the 2026 RCEA Community Advisory Committee meeting calendar.

## Attachments

- Proposed 2026 RCEA Community Advisory Committee meeting calendar

# Redwood Coast Energy Authority

## Community Advisory Committee

### 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

The CAC meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each odd-numbered month. Meetings are held from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center Auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

January 13, 2026	Regular meeting
March 10, 2026	Regular meeting
May 12, 2026	Regular meeting
July 14, 2026	Regular meeting
September 8, 2026	Regular meeting
November 10, 2026	Regular meeting
January 12, 2027	Regular meeting

The Community Advisory Committee meets in-person. Community members are welcome to participate in-person at the Jefferson Community Center, or online or by phone via Zoom. Meeting participation instructions are listed online at <https://redwoodenergy.org/about/public-meetings/> and at the beginning of each meeting agenda.





# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 5

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Elizabeth Burks, Executive Director
<b>Subject</b>	Executive Director's Report

## Summary

Executive Director Elizabeth Burks will provide updates on topics as needed.

## Staff Recommendation

None. Information only.

## Attachments

None.

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# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 6

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Faith Carlson, Regulatory and Legislative Policy Manager Kyle Groben, Regulatory and Legislative Policy Intern
<b>Subject</b>	2026 Policy Platform Update

## Background

On March 24, 2022, the RCEA Board of Directors adopted the RCEA 2022 Policy Platform (Platform), which is brought to the Board periodically (typically annually) for updates. The purpose of the Platform is to deliver on RCEA's RePower Humboldt goals and maintain the operation of RCEA's various programs. The Platform allows RCEA to be nimbler in adopting positions on regulatory and legislative matters in a timely manner without full Board approval if the position is aligned with the Board-approved platform. This Platform also helps inform RCEA's regulatory activities to ensure staff engagement aligns with the Board's priorities and RCEA's goals.

The 2025 Policy Platform and Draft 2026 Policy Platform support the following overarching policy priorities:

- To maintain local control to preserve the ability to self-procure its power resources, and to self-determine rates and the energy programs RCEA offers to its residents, businesses, and communities it serves, through the mechanisms of local governance;
- To restructure the electric utility sector to allow for increased government ownership of energy infrastructure;
- To ensure cost effective reliable energy service and programming;
- To support community resilience;
- To increase the utilization of energy resources that mitigate climate change and support climate adaptation plans;
- To support the development of local renewable energy resources;
- To provide equitable and just economic, resilience, and climate benefits to the local community;
- To maintain an efficient, transparent governance structure and operations that preserve Board approved programs.

## Summary

RCEA staff reviewed the 2025 Policy Platform and suggested revisions which are redlined in the attached document.



Below are the substantive changes:

Location in Document	Summary of Change
Throughout document	Syntax changes removing Support/Oppose Policy to describe final outcome of policy.
Procedures	Combined Regulatory and Legislative procedures into one item. Recent changes to Policy Platform removed requirements for Board approval for Legislative items. Language added related to RCEA's Racial Justice Plan.
1. Local Governance and Statutory Authority	Addition of language surrounding local resource development. Consolidated with former Local Economic Development and Environmental Objectives Section.
2. Restructuring the Electricity Utility Sector	Combination of item related to agency and IOU collaboration and item related to data access.
3. Reliability	Language surrounding outages broadened to cover a broader range of outage types.
4. Community Resilience	Language surrounding funding for community resilience broadened to cover a larger range of events. Language related to local resource development removed and relocated to section related to Governance and Statutory Authority.
5. Climate Action	No Change.
6. Energy Generation Sources	Language related to local resource development and CCA procurement removed and relocated to section related to Governance and Statutory Authority. Section related to wind energy moved from former Local Economic Development and Environmental Objectives Section.
7. Environmental Justice and Equity	RCEA's Racial Justice Plan moved to Procedures section. Section related to disaster response removed and added as a subsection to this portion.
8. Programs	Bullets slightly rearranged for readability.

## Alignment with RCEA's Strategic Plan

The Platform was developed to allow RCEA to efficiently engage in regulatory and legislative development that will support RCEA's ability to implement strategies in RePower Humboldt and achieve the objectives articulated in RCEA's Mission Statement.

## Equity Impacts

The Platform contains a section on "Environmental Justice" which includes "engag[ing] in policy that directly or indirectly impact the ability of rural, low-income, and underserved communities to have affordable, reliable and clean energy."

This section also includes support for policies that "enable all communities [...] to participate in the decarbonization of the state's electrical grid, building stock, and the transportation sector in a cost-



effective manner,” and support “for metrics and cost effectiveness rules that do not create a disadvantage in serving equity customers.”

## **Financial Impact**

Funding for staff advocacy and regulatory work related to positions outlined in the RCEA Policy Platform is included in the agency’s current fiscal year budget.

## **Staff Recommendation**

Provide input on draft 2026 RCEA Policy Platform updates.

## **Attachments**

Redwood Coast Energy Authority Draft 2026 Policy Platform, clean and redlined.



# REDWOOD COAST ENERGY AUTHORITY

## 2026 POLICY PLATFORM

### INTRODUCTION

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Redwood Coast Energy Authority (“RCEA”) is a joint powers authority of the cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad, the Yurok Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria, County of Humboldt, and the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. The mission of RCEA is to develop and implement sustainable energy initiatives that reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency, and advance the use of clean, efficient, and renewable resources available in the region for the benefit of the member agencies and their constituents.

This Policy Platform serves as a guide for regulatory and legislative engagement based on principles set forth in RCEA’s [RePower Humboldt 2019 Update](#)

### AVENUES AND EXAMPLES OF ADVOCACY

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Legislation and regulation are two distinct, but related, policy tools. Legislation sets principles of public policy, while regulation implements these principles and brings legislation into effect.

Examples of RCEA legislative advocacy include submitting letters in support or opposition of specific bills, as well as meeting with legislators in the California State Senate, the California State Assembly, U.S. House of Representatives, and U.S. Senate.

Most of RCEA’s regulatory engagement takes place through the California Public Utilities Commission, the primary State agency responsible for executing legislation and issuing regulations pertinent to Community Choice Aggregation (“CCA”) and Regional Energy Network (“REN”) operations. However, RCEA’s operations are also impacted by other state and federal agencies including but not limited to the California Energy Commission, the California Independent System Operator, the California Air Resources Board, the California Department of Water Resources, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Examples of advocacy in this sphere include meeting with agency staff, agency decision-makers, and submitting comments in response to regulations.

### PROCEDURES

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RCEA regulatory and legislative engagement is conducted at the staff level under the authority of the Executive Director in a manner consistent with RCEA’s mission, this policy platform, RCEA’s strategic plan, RCEA’s Racial Justice Plan, and any applicable RCEA plans and policies.

Issues not addressed in the platform will continue to be brought to the Board on a case-by-case basis. To keep the Board apprised of advocacy activities, staff will notify the full Board of positions taken by RCEA through periodic reports to the Board summarizing policy engagement. This platform will be brought to the RCEA Board on an annual basis for review and input.

## Policy Priorities

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### 1. Local Governance and Statutory Authority

- a. Ensure jurisdictions and tribal governments can form or become members of a CCA or REN.
- b. Protect local governments and CCA rate-setting, programming, or procurement autonomy.
- c. Empower CCA and REN ability to effectively and affordably serve their customers.
- d. Support CCA and REN customer engagement and operational transparency.
- e. Enable CCAs and RENs to collaborate with their member jurisdictions on local energy resources and projects to advance environmental objectives.
- f. Support the development of energy generation projects that align with Board-adopted strategic plan goals and RCEA's energy risk policy, as long as local development and siting criteria are consistent with city and county land use authority, other local and state regulatory requirements, and informed by input from local communities including but not limited to tribal governments.

### 2. Restructuring the Electricity Utility Sector

- a. Reduce reliance on Investor-Owned Utilities ("IOUs"):
  - i. Support governments' ability to fund or own electric infrastructure, including transmission and distribution infrastructure.
  - ii. Stabilize, remove, or reduce costs associated with leaving IOU service, such as the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment or costs associated with maintaining a Provider of Last Resort.
- b. Where IOU service is retained:
  - i. Reform the utility regulatory and business model to transform IOUs into entities that solely provide transmission and distribution services.
  - ii. Discourage new gas infrastructure and retire or repurpose existing gas infrastructure, while recognizing and addressing social inequities that retirement of such infrastructure may cause.
  - iii. Reform the utility regulatory and business model to ensure IOUs deliver effective service to ratepayers, increase safety and reliability, and reduce costs.
  - iv. Foster greater collaboration and data sharing among CCAs, RENs, tribes, state and local governments, and IOUs, particularly in local planning efforts related to energy resources, load planning, and programs.
- c. Oppose direct access to electric service expansion.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Reliability

- a. Outage Events
  - i. Reduce duration and frequency of power outages and improve grid reliability.
  - ii. Increase transparency surrounding outage events.
  - iii. Create standards and thresholds for outage events.
  - iv. Support equitable treatment of non-utility owned generation during shutoff

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/consumer-programs-and-services/electrical-energy-and-energy-efficiency/community-choice-aggregation-and-direct-access-/direct-access>

events and during related island operation of sections of the grid.

**b. Resource Adequacy (“RA”)**

- i. Reform the RA program to improve system reliability cost-effectively.
- ii. Remove barriers to demand response, microgrids, and behind the meter resources to provide RA or other demand-reduction value.
- c. Allow for reliable customer access to the grid and connection of new resources and loads through transmission and distribution development and maintenance

**4. Community Resilience**

- a. Support funding programs to increase community resilience to electric service disruptions.
- b. Increase the development of community-level resources distributed energy resources that reduce the need for new transmission and distribution infrastructure.

**5. Climate Action**

- a. Increase resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation and support initiatives that will strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

**6. Energy Generation Sources**

- a. Support development of local and regional sources of renewable energy, including efforts to establish Humboldt Bay as the primary west coast hub for the offshore wind industry.
- b. Advocate for permanent waste solutions for nuclear plants and oppose policies that extend the life of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

**7. Environmental Justice and Equity**

- a. Engage in policy developments that impact the ability of rural, low-income, and underserved communities to have affordable, reliable, and clean energy.
- b. Enable all communities, including emerging and historically marginalized communities, and individuals, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, in California to participate in the decarbonization of the state’s electric grid, building stock, and the transportation sector in a cost-effective manner.
- c. Advocate for metrics and cost effectiveness rules that do not create a disadvantage in serving equity customers.
- d. Allow Tribal Nations to be recognized by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as public agencies for the purpose of being eligible to be direct recipients of CPUC program funding.
- e. Oppose the shifting of marginal costs of interconnecting and serving large new industrial or commercial loads such as data centers to other rate classes such as residential and small commercial customers.
- f. Alleviate residential and commercial financial hardship caused by public health emergencies or natural disasters.

**8. Programs**

- a. Protect CCA and REN autonomy to administer Board approved programs, including but not limited to:
  - i. Integrated demand side management (including but not limited to microgrids,



- distributed energy resources, demand response, energy efficiency, electrification, distributed generation and storage, vehicle-to-grid storage)
- ii. Low-carbon transportation (including but not limited to advanced fuel deployment, fuel efficiency, fueling infrastructure)
  - iii. Energy generation and utility services (including but not limited to rates and tariffs, transmission and distribution infrastructure)
- b. Avoid interruptions, gaps, or reductions in program funding.
  - c. Protect Public Purpose Program support for energy efficiency and equity programs.
  - d. Treat non-regulated fuels, such as propane and firewood, comparably with natural gas in allowing for electrification incentives.

DRAFT



# REDWOOD COAST ENERGY AUTHORITY

## 20265 POLICY PLATFORM

### INTRODUCTION

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Redwood Coast Energy Authority ("RCEA") is a joint-powers authority of the cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad, the Yurok Tribe, Blue Lake Rancheria, County of Humboldt, and the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. The mission of RCEA is to develop and implement sustainable energy initiatives that reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency, and advance the use of clean, efficient, and renewable resources available in the region for the benefit of the member agencies and their constituents.

This Policy Platform serves as a guide for regulatory and legislative engagement based on principles set forth in RCEA's ~~RePower Humboldt~~ strategic plan. ~~To review RCEA's strategic plan, please see~~ RePower Humboldt 2019 Update

### AVENUES AND EXAMPLES OF ADVOCACY

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Legislation and regulation are two distinct, but related, policy tools. Legislation sets principles of public policy, while regulation implements these principles and brings legislation into effect.

Examples of RCEA legislative advocacy include submitting letters in support or opposition of specific bills, as well as meeting with legislators in the California State Senate, the California State Assembly, U.S. House of Representatives, and U.S. Senate.

Most of RCEA's regulatory engagement takes place through the California Public Utilities Commission, the primary State agency responsible for executing legislation and issuing regulations pertinent to Community Choice Aggregation ("CCA") and Regional Energy Network ("REN") operations. However, RCEA's operations are also impacted by other state and federal agencies including but not limited to the California Energy Commission, the California Independent System Operator, the California Air Resources Board, the California Department of Water Resources, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Examples of advocacy in this sphere include meeting with agency staff, agency decision-makers, and submitting comments in response to regulations.

### PROCEDURES

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~~**Regulatory Engagement:**~~ RCEA regulatory and legislative engagement ~~at the CPUC and other agencies~~ is conducted at the staff level under the authority of the Executive Director in a manner consistent with RCEA's mission, this policy platform, RCEA's strategic plan, and any applicable RCEA plans and policies.

~~**Legislative Advocacy:**~~ The RCEA Executive Director, or their designee, is authorized to adopt positions on legislative matters in a timely manner without Board approval if the position is aligned with the issue areas described below.

Issues not addressed in the platform will continue to be brought to the Board on a case-by-case basis.

To keep the Board apprised of advocacy activities, staff will notify the full Board of ~~any legislative~~ positions taken by RCEA through periodic reports to the Board summarizing ~~policy~~ legislative engagement.

~~While the platform attempts to address a full range of issues of interest to RCEA, it is not intended to limit RCEA's engagement in other issues that may impact RCEA in a positive or negative way. Issues not addressed in the platform will continue to be brought to the Board on a case-by-case basis.~~

This platform will be brought to the RCEA Board on an annual basis for review and input.

## **Policy Priorities ~~SSUE AREAS~~**

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### **1. Governance and Statutory Authority**

RCEA will:

- a. Ensure jurisdictions and tribal governments can form or become members of a CCA or REN.
- ~~b. Oppose policies that limit~~ Protect local governments ~~and/or~~ CCA rate-setting, programming, or procurement autonomy.
- ~~a. Oppose policies that would shift marginal costs of interconnecting and serving large new industrial or commercial loads such as data centers to other rate classes such as residential and small commercial customers.~~
- ~~b.c. Oppose policies that limit~~ Empower CCA and REN ability to effectively and affordably serve their customers.
- ~~e.d. Support policies that allow CCAs and REN~~ customer engagement and operational transparencys to engage with their customers and promote transparency in their operations.
- ~~d. Oppose policies that require CCAs to purchase specific energy products, thus limiting the ability of CCAs to meet local energy needs in a cost-effective manner and in conflict with their local procurement and rate setting authority. Support policies that make it easier for jurisdictions to form or become members of a CCA or REN and oppose regulations and legislation that restrict such ability.~~
- e. Support policies that allow for tribal governments to be full participation in CCAs. Enable CCAs and RENs to collaborate with their member jurisdictions on local energy resources and projects to advance environmental objectives.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_
- ~~e. Support~~ the development of ~~resources~~ energy generation projects that align with Board-adopted strategic plan goals and ~~our~~ RCEA's energy risk policy, as long as local development and siting criteria are consistent with city and county land use authority, other local and state regulatory requirements, and informed by input from local communities including but not limited to tribal governments.

### **2. Restructuring the Electricity Utility Sector**

RCEA will:

- a. ~~Support policies that r~~ Reduce reliance on Investor-Owned Utilities ("IOUs"); ~~such as~~
  - i. ~~Polices that s~~ Support governments' ability to fund or own electric

- infrastructure, including transmission and distribution infrastructure.
- ii. ~~Policies that s~~Stabilize, remove, or reduce costs associated with leaving IOU service, such as the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment or costs associated with maintaining a Provider of Last Resort.
- b. Where IOU service is retained: ~~advocate for:~~
  - i. Reform ~~s to~~ the utility regulatory and business model to transform IOUs into entities that solely provide transmission and distribution services.
  - ii. ~~Efforts to d~~Discourage new gas infrastructure and retire or repurpose existing gas infrastructure, while recognizing and addressing social inequities that retirement of such infrastructure may cause.
  - iii. Reforms ~~s to~~ the utility regulatory and business model to ensure IOUs deliver effective service to ratepayers, increase safety and reliability, and reduce costs.
  - iv. ~~Foster G~~greater collaboration and data sharing to occur between among CCAs, RENs, tribes, state and local governments, and IOUs, particularly in local planning efforts related to energy resources, load planning, and programs.
  - v. ~~Increased data access to IOU data, such as customer program enrollment, meter data, and load planning data.~~
- c. Oppose ~~policies that expand~~ direct access retail electric service expansion.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Reliability

~~RCEA will:~~

#### a. Outage Events

- ~~a.i. Support policies that r~~Reduce duration and frequency of power outages and improve grid reliability, ~~such as Public Safety Power Shut-Offs ("PSPS").~~
- ~~ii. Support policies that i~~Increase the notification and transparency requirements on IOUs as they implement a PSPS ~~surrounding outage events.~~
- ~~iii. Support policies that c~~Create standards and thresholds for outage events. ~~PSPS implementation and impose penalties on IOUs that execute PSPS below those standards.~~
- ~~iii.iv. Support policies that call for~~ equitable treatment of non-utility owned generation during shutoff ~~PSPS~~ Public Safety Power Shutoff events and during related islanded operation of sections of the grid.

#### b. **Resource Adequacy ("RA")**

- i. ~~Support R~~reforms ~~to~~ the RA program to improve system reliability cost-effectively at a reasonable cost to ratepayers.
- ii. ~~Advocate for and support efforts to r~~Remove barriers to demand response, microgrids, and behind the meter resources to provide RA or other demand-reduction value.
- c. ~~Advocate for transmission and distribution development and maintenance to a~~Allow for reliable customer access to the grid and connection of new resources and loads through transmission and distribution development and maintenance.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/consumer-support/consumer-programs-and-services/electrical-energy-and-energy-efficiency/community-choice-aggregation-and-direct-access-/direct-access>

#### **4. Emergency and Disaster Response**

RCEA will

- a. Support policies to alleviate residential and commercial financial hardship caused by public health emergencies or natural disasters that could disrupt electricity service or restrict customer access to clean energy and transportation opportunities.

#### **5.4. Community Resilience**

RCEA will:

- a. Advocate for and support funding for programs implemented by local governments, CCAs, and RENO to increase community resilience to wildfires, PSPS events and other potential service disruptions to electric service disruptions.
- b. Support policies that reduce barriers to microgrid development by CCAs and other local entities including tribes and local governments.
- c. Support policies that expand the ability of non-IOU entities to develop microgrids (e.g., ensuring CCA access to ratepayer funds to develop microgrids).
- d. Support policies that increase the development of community level resources and distributed energy resources that reduce the need for new transmission and distribution infrastructure.

#### **6.5. Climate Action**

RCEA will:

- a. Support policies that increase resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation and support initiatives that will strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

#### **7.6. Energy Generation Sources**

RCEA will:

- a. Support policies that expand opportunities for, or reduce barriers to the development of resources that align with Board adopted strategic plan goals and our energy risk policy, as long as local development and siting criteria are consistent with city and county land use authority, other local and state regulatory requirements, and informed by input from tribal governments.
- b. Oppose policies that require CCAs to purchase specific energy products, thus limiting the ability of CCAs to meet local energy needs in a cost-effective manner and in conflict with their local procurement and rate setting authority.
- a. Advocate for permanent waste solutions for nuclear plants and oppose policies that extend the life of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.
- c.b. Oppose development of new nuclear power generation in California. Support development of local and regional sources of renewable energy, including efforts to establish Humboldt Bay as the primary west coast hub for the offshore wind industry.

#### **8.7. Environmental Justice and Equity**

RCEA will:

- a. Advocate for policies that align with RCEA's Racial Justice Plan.
- b.a. Engage in policy developments that directly or indirectly impact the ability of rural, low-income, and underserved communities to have affordable, reliable, and clean energy.
- c.b. Support policies that enable all communities, including emerging and historically

marginalized communities, and individuals, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, in California to participate in the decarbonization of the state's electric grid, building stock, and the transportation sector in a cost-effective manner.

- ~~d.c.~~ Advocate for metrics and cost effectiveness rules that do not create a disadvantage in serving equity customers.
- ~~d.~~ Support and advocate for policies that a Allow Tribal Nations to be recognized by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) as public agencies for the purpose of being eligible to be direct recipients of CPUC program funding.
- ~~e.~~ Oppose the shifting of marginal costs of interconnecting and serving large new industrial or commercial loads such as data centers to other rate classes such as residential and small commercial customers.
- ~~e.f.~~ Alleviate residential and commercial financial hardship caused by public health emergencies or natural disasters.

### **9.8. RCEA Programs**

RCEA will support policies that:

- ~~a.~~ Protect CCA and REN autonomy to administer Board approved programs, ~~including but not limited to:~~
  - ~~i.~~ Integrated demand side management (including but not limited to microgrids, distributed energy resources, demand response, energy efficiency, electrification, distributed generation and storage, vehicle to grid storage)
  - ~~ii.~~ Low carbon transportation (including but not limited to advanced fuel deployment, fuel efficiency, fueling infrastructure)
  - ~~iii.i.~~ Energy generation and utility services (including but not limited to rates and tariffs, transmission and distribution infrastructure)
- ~~b.~~ Avoid interruptions, gaps, or reductions in program funding.
- ~~b.c.~~ Protect Public Purpose Program support for energy efficiency programs.
- ~~c.d.~~ Support ~~Treat~~ non-regulated fuels, such as propane and firewood, ~~to be treated comparably with natural gas in allowing for electrification incentives.~~
- ~~d.~~ Avoid interruptions, gaps, or reductions in program funding.

### **10. Local Economic Development and Environmental Objectives**

RCEA will:

- ~~a.~~ Support policies that enhance opportunities for local governments, CCAs, and RENs to promote local economic and workforce development through locally designed programs that meet the unique needs of its member agencies and customers.
- ~~b.~~ Support efforts to enhance development of local and regional sources of renewable energy, including efforts to establish Humboldt Bay as the primary west coast hub for the offshore wind industry
- ~~c.~~ Support policies that e ~~Enable~~ CCAs and RENs to collaborate with their member jurisdictions on local energy resources and projects to advance environmental objectives.



# Staff Report

Agenda Item # 7

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Patricia Terry, Senior Portfolio Manager
<b>Subject</b>	Northern Rural Energy Network (NREN) Updates

## Background

On September 26, 2024, The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) issued Decision D.24-09-031 that approved the Northern California Rural Regional Energy Network (also known as Northern Rural Energy Network or NREN) to deliver energy efficiency programs to underserved rural customers in 17 counties with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) as the lead portfolio administrator.

The NREN Partners include Lake Area Planning Council (LAPC), Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG), and the Sierra Business Council (SBC) representing the Counties of Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Lassen, Mariposa, Nevada, Plumas, Placer, Sierra, Sutter, Tuolumne, and Yuba.

The NREN program portfolio included 7 programs: Residential Equity, Residential Resource Acquisition, Commercial Resource Acquisition, Financing, Public Equity, Workforce, Education & Training, and Codes & Standards. At the end of 2025, the Codes & Standards programs was absorbed into the Workforce, Education & Training program.

## Summary

After the first full year of ramp up and implementation, NREN has launched services from the two residential programs in the portfolio and will be launching the remaining programs in 2026. NREN is already seeing impacts across Partner counties, particularly those that have not previously received any energy efficiency services from other agencies.

NREN Achievements for 2024-5:

- Residential Equity Program: Provide energy efficiency education and outreach, energy efficiency kits, and phone-based assessments.
  - 623 kits distributed (160 in Humboldt)
  - 87 phone home efficiency assessments completed (52 in Humboldt)
  - 581 signed up for services (146 in Humboldt)
- Residential Resource Program (through Q3 of 2025):
  - 312 energy efficient appliance and heat pump rebates processed
  - \$89,101 in rebates paid out





- Savings numbers are still being calculated and will be available on CEDARS.  
<http://cedars.cpuc.ca.gov>.

NREN also procured several consultants to perform needs assessments across the region to ensure our program design addresses the actual needs of our communities, as well as identifying the best ways to reach those needs.

- Needs assessments:
  - ERI: Completed non-residential needs assessment
  - Frontier Energy: Financing needs assessments in progress and near completion
  - SMUD: Residential needs assessment in progress with completion anticipated in June 2026

NREN intends to launch the remainder of the programs in 2026:

- Commercial Resource Acquisition: This program will provide energy assessments, incentives, and technical support to small business customers looking to reduce energy usage and costs, and/or to decarbonize.
- Financing: Provides support to access energy efficiency financing.
- Public Equity: This program will provide support to local government agencies looking to understand and reduce energy usage and costs, decarbonize, or put together plans for addressing these needs in the future.
- Workforce, Education, and Training: This program works with community colleges, tribes, and other training providers to create local training opportunities for the energy efficiency workforce.

NREN's current program cycle is 2024 to 2027. In March of 2026, RCEA will submit a Business Plan Application to the CPUC for 2028-2035. This Business Plan Application will include a strategic plan for 2028-2035 and program portfolio for 2028-2031. NREN intends to request approximately \$65-\$85M for the four-year program portfolio budget. Programs will be similar to those in the current portfolio, with the potential of growth across all programs.

NREN will add Yolo County as a service territory in the Business Plan Application and include a market characterization of other Northern California counties that could be added in the future including Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama. Yolo County brings their sustainability department's many years of expertise and programs, including the Home Energy Score program, to NREN's team and service offerings.

## Alignment with RCEA's Strategic Plan

NREN's programs support all 2.1 Integrated Demand Side Management Strategies and all 2.2 Energy Efficiency and Conservation strategies of RePower Humboldt, RCEA's Comprehensive Action Plan for Energy.<sup>1</sup>

## Equity Impacts

RENs in general, and NREN in particular, are designed to reach customers that otherwise are not being reached by existing ratepayer-funded programs. The NREN programs will ensure that hard-to-reach, disinvested, disadvantaged, and underserved rural customers are provided an equitable level of CPUC energy program service and support and are empowered to better manage their energy use and cost





through increased awareness, support resources, a trained workforce and access to financing to improve their homes and businesses.

## **Financial Impact**

NREN activities between 2024 and 2027 currently have approved funding of \$3.3M and the upcoming Business Plan Application has potential bring an additional \$65-85M for 2028-2031 and \$85-\$100M for 2032-2035. RCEA's portion would be approximately 10% of those budgets for administrative costs and include about \$15-\$20M in program implementation costs per 4-year cycle.

## **Staff Recommendation**

None. This item is information only.

## **Attachments**

None.

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<sup>i</sup> Link to RePower Humboldt, RCEA's Strategic Plan:  
<https://redwoodenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/850/2025/09/REpower-2019-Strategic-Plan-250919.pdf>

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# Staff Report

Agenda Item #8

## Information

<b>Agenda Date</b>	January 13, 2026
<b>To</b>	Community Advisory Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Richard Engel, Director of Power Resources
<b>Subject</b>	Sandrini Energy Storage Community Investment Fund

## Background

Public entities, including community choice aggregators (CCAs), sometimes require contribution to a community benefit fund as a condition of awarding contracts. Benefits might be aimed at the community impacted by development of a project, or at the community served by the public entity, or both. Alternatively, public agencies may weigh offers to provide such funds when scoring competing project offers. To date, RCEA has researched how other CCAs have secured community benefits and has used a variety of its own approaches to ensure energy projects RCEA contracts for offer community benefits beyond the clean energy generated.

- Community benefits are used as a scoring criterion in RCEA's requests for offers. For example, RCEA's most recent request for offers for renewable power supply allocated 10 out of a possible 100 points to "location and community benefits." However, the benefits offered are often broad and speculative in nature, and resulting contracts typically do not bind the project developer to deliver on these benefits.
- In some instances, RCEA has introduced a request for community benefits funding at the negotiation stage of a project already short-listed for contracting. As one example, developer Ormat agreed in the binding terms of the contract for their Tierra Buena energy storage project to provide funding for creation of clean energy workforce curriculum. This curriculum was made available to educators in both Sutter County where the project was developed and locally in Humboldt. This curriculum focused on identifying the skills and knowledge needed to find employment in the clean energy field, and what pathways a worker might take to gaining these skills and knowledge.

## Summary

Staff seek input from the CAC on a new instance of community benefits funds. In 2024, RCEA entered into an energy storage service agreement with renewable energy developer EDP Renewables (EDPR) for their Sandrini Battery Energy Storage System located in Kern County, CA. This project is presently nearing completion and is co-located with the Sandrini solar project that has been delivering clean energy to RCEA since late 2024. During contract negotiations for the battery project, RCEA staff



proposed a Community Investment Fund be provided by EDPR. This was captured in the terms of the agreement as follows:

Seller [EDPR] agrees to fund a “Community Investment Fund” (“CI Fund”) through a onetime payment by Seller of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000). Within sixty (60) days after the Commercial Operation Date [expected to occur early in 2026], Seller will deposit the funds in a distinct and separate account established and maintained at a bank or financial institution selected by Buyer [RCEA] that is reasonably acceptable to Seller.

The CI Fund will be administered by Buyer for the direct benefit of residents of Humboldt County where Buyer serves its customers and/or Kern County where the Project is to be located, and subject to mutual agreement by the Parties, including agreement on how the funds will be allocated between the two counties. The CI Fund will be allocated towards activities related to workforce development, education, or other community investments. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the CI Fund shall not be allocated in a manner that is inconsistent with the applicable provisions of law pertaining to conflicts of interest, including the California Political Reform Act (Gov. Code §§ 87100 et seq.) and California Government Code Section 1090.

Staff request input from the CAC on the following questions related to this fund:

- How should the funds be directed? Should we seek to expend the funds within the next fiscal year? Alternatively, should they be deposited in an endowment with only the earnings expended over the long term, or should they be expended for near-term benefits? A hypothetical 4% earnings rate on \$250,000 would yield \$10,000 per year.
- How should the benefits from the funds be distributed in RCEA’s Humboldt County service area and/or the energy storage project’s host community of Kern County? Should both communities receive a portion of the funds?
- What kinds of project(s) or program(s) should the funds support? As an example, the Social Impact Partnership operated by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and its CleanPowerSF CCA<sup>1</sup> uses four program areas:
  - Job exposure, training, and internships
  - Small business support
  - Public education
  - Environment and community health

Projects performed under San Francisco’s program may be performed either in the community impacted by the energy project being developed, or within the CCA’s San Francisco service area.

## Alignment with RCEA’s Strategic Plan

A community benefits fund as envisioned by staff could potentially support many elements of RCEA’s Strategic Plan. Strategies that are potentially most aligned with such a fund are:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sfpuc.gov/construction-contracts/contract-opportunities-payments/social-impact-partnership-program>



- **1.1.3 Support Energy-sector Workforce Development.** Work with other local entities to provide training and continuing education that develops and maintains a qualified local workforce available to implement energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy projects, and advanced-vehicle technology deployment.
- **1.3.3 Develop Job Development Incentives.** Collaborate with local economic development entities to identify funding opportunities for developing jobs in the field of energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable sources.
- **1.3.5 Develop Local Energy Investment Programs.** Work with local economic development entities and financial institutions to develop programs and resources that facilitate local community investment in and/or ownership of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.
- **1.4.8 Develop Programs that Foster Social Equity.** Identify, fund, and establish new programs that address the energy needs of the least advantaged and underserved members of our community.
- **1.4.9 Embrace Public Health and Environmental Quality as Key Objectives of Energy Planning.** Seek to maximize public health and environmental benefits and minimize negative impacts in selecting, planning, and implementing energy policies, programs, and projects.
- **4.1.3 Act as Community Liaison to Renewable Energy Developers.** Using RCEA's position as a wholesale power purchaser, work with developers on proactive strategies to reduce and mitigate the environmental and community impacts of potential energy projects. Ensure that local projects are developed in such a way that prioritizes community benefits.

## Equity Impacts

Depending on how a community investment fund is directed, it could offer equity benefits such as workforce development or public health benefits for vulnerable communities or populations. Strategy 1.4.8 above makes clear that focusing the fund on social equity would be consistent with RCEA's strategic plan.

RCEA's Racial Justice Plan<sup>2</sup> states that "RCEA will continue to include project location and community benefit in its evaluation criteria for power solicitations, in an effort to contract for projects that benefit racially diverse communities and to avoid projects that are detrimental to those communities."

## Financial Impact

The \$250,000 community investment fund from EDPR is meant to be a pass-through that will not benefit or impact RCEA financially, apart from the modest cost of staff time needed to administer the funds.

## Staff Recommendation

Provide specific recommendations for the RCEA Board on use of the \$250,000 Community Investment Fund to be provided by EDPR per the terms of their Sandrini Energy Storage Service Agreement with RCEA.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://redwoodenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/850/2024/12/Racial-Justice-Plan.pdf>

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