

Public Comment

May 28, 2026 RCEA
Board of Directors Meeting

Agenda Item # 8.1 - Introduce Annual Budget Options



May 26, 2026

Redwood Coast Energy Authority
Board of Directors Members & Alternates

via email: publiccomments@redwoodenergy.org
cc: bburks@redwoodenergy.org; sschaefer@cityofarcata.org;
mmatthews@cityofarcata.org; escafani@bluelake.ca.gov;
knapier@bluelake.ca.gov; mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us;
narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us; sbauer@eurekaca.gov; rcontreras@eurekaca.gov;
cityclerk@ci.ferndale.ca.us; cdiaz@ci.fortuna.ca.us; wilsonf@cityofriodell.ca.gov;
garnesd@cityofriodell.ca.gov; jtuttle@trinidad.ca.gov; ckelly@trinidad.ca.gov;
mgerace@yuroktribe.nsn.us; lamccovey@yuroktribe.nsn.us;
jramos@bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov; hguynup@bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov

RE: Implementation of the Regional Climate Action Plan

Directors and Alternates:

Over the last eight years, the County of Humboldt and its seven incorporated cities along with RCEA and other local agencies (collectively “RCAP partner agencies”) developed and negotiated the Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP). The RCAP is the region’s response to the climate crisis, which is already showing itself in the form of more severe wildfires and floods, rising sea levels, marine heatwaves, climate-fueled migration, and other significant impacts to our region.

The RCAP has now been officially adopted by local jurisdictions including the county, Eureka, Arcata, and Rio Dell, and is expected to be adopted by all RCAP partner agencies. Your Board

has provided direction to staff to create a new staffing structure allowing for RCEA to function as the regional coordinating agency for RCAP implementation.

The “cornerstone strategy” of the RCAP is the creation of a Regional Climate Committee and the hiring of a Climate Program Manager. The implementation of the entire plan is premised on this strategy. Moreover, the success of the plan depends on this happening quickly. Phase 1 of the plan, including many of its key measures, is intended to be complete by the end of 2026, with the entire RCAP meant to be implemented in the less than four years between now and 2030.

Negotiations between RCAP partner agencies over approximately the last year have led to a consensus that the county and each of the cities would contribute a proportional share of the cost of hiring the Climate Program Manager, also known as the RCAP Administrator, to be housed at RCEA. Now, however, we suddenly hear that RCAP partner agencies are backing out of their commitments to hire a regional RCAP manager, leaving the entirety of the plan—and the commitment of local governments to meaningful climate action—in doubt.

Your agenda packet for Thursday, May 28, 2026, includes a report that “several city managers have expressed that due to budget constraints it will be difficult or not possible to contribute funding for an RCAP Administrator position,” and that the RCAP “regional working group has pivoted and no longer anticipates this position being funded.” Elsewhere in your agenda packet, you are asked to consider the possibility of freezing the just-approved position of Director of Engagement and Regional Climate Planning—meant to oversee the RCAP Administrator and other key programs—as well as defunding customer-facing climate programs. Together, these developments signal a complete abandonment of the RCAP by key partners mere months after its long-awaited completion.

It is completely unacceptable for a staff-level “working group,” meeting in private with no public engagement or oversight, to renege on commitments made by numerous local governing bodies to implement the RCAP. It is equally unacceptable for RCEA to back out of its own very recent commitment to create the governmental structure required for regional RCAP implementation.

With this letter, we remind you of RCEA’s key role in developing the RCAP and its commitment to implementation. For those of you representing the county or one of its incorporated cities, we further remind you of your own agencies’ commitments to implementation, including the cornerstone strategy of creating a Regional Climate Committee and hiring a Climate Program Manager/RCAP Administrator. We respectfully insist:

1. RCEA must hire an RCAP Administrator when the new fiscal year begins, and RCEA’s budget must include funding for the Director of Engagement and Regional Climate Planning.

2. Directors and Alternates representing the County of Humboldt and its incorporated cities must ensure that member agencies provide proportionate funding toward the hiring of the RCAP Administrator.
3. RCEA must convene a Brown Act-compliant Regional Climate Committee as soon as possible and bring the work of RCAP implementation out from behind closed doors.
4. RCEA's budget must at a minimum continue funding for existing programs which implement specific measures in the RCAP, including e-bike rebates and energy efficiency and decarbonization programs.

We understand that budgets are strained at all local governments. However, the costs of hiring a single regional RCAP Administrator and continuing RCEA customer-facing climate programs represent tiny fractions of the budgets of RCEA and its member agencies. These very small investments are crucial for addressing the climate crisis locally. RCEA and other local governments have committed to RCAP implementation, and it would be a betrayal of the public trust to abandon the cornerstone implementation strategy so soon after the plan's completion.

With the development and adoption of the RCAP, you promised your constituents to do everything in your power to mitigate the escalating climate crisis. The hiring of staff and the creation of the Regional Climate Committee are the key first steps, and the bare minimum you can do to follow through on your commitment.

Sincerely,

Colin Fiske, Executive Director
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Matt Simmons, Climate Attorney
Environmental Protection Information Center

Dan Chandler, Steering Committee Member
350 Humboldt

Melodie Meyer, Co-Director
Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility

Jennifer Kalt, Executive Director
Humboldt Waterkeeper