

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO'S COMPREHENSIVE RENEWABLE ENERGY PLAN PHASE 1

POSITION: The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee voted to take a "support with recommendations" position and provided detailed recommendations on December 1, 2016. The plan be on the Chamber's Public Policy Committee consent agenda on December 13, 2016.

STATUS: The plan with County staff recommendations will go before the County Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2017.

AT-A-GLANCE

The County's Comprehensive Renewable Energy Plan Phase I represents County staff preliminary research and analysis, resulting in 11 recommendations to be considered by the Board of Supervisors in early 2017. The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee provided detailed recommendations that are outlined in this document. The Chamber's representative who sat on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for this plan was present to provide the TAC perspective and context. The Chamber's recommendations include the County leading a regional dialogue on cost-effective strategies for greenhouse gas reduction by prioritizing the transportation sector, minimizing risk, maintaining flexibility, and working with various stakeholders including SDG&E.

SUMMARY

The County of San Diego's Comprehensive Renewable Energy Plan (CREP) Phase I represents County staff preliminary research and analysis, informed by work conducted by Ascent Environmental and stakeholder engagement relating to the economy, feasibility, and potential best management practices (BMPs). A preliminary discussion of alternative energy models, such as Community Choice Aggregation, Direct Access, and Sustainable Energy Utility, were included within the CREP. Seventeen "BMPs" were identified through development by consultants, stakeholders, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). County staff ultimately made their own recommendation that the County Board of Supervisors consider moving forward with 11 of the 17 identified "BMPs." Those 11 "BMPs" are:

1. Prepare a Community Choice Aggregation Feasibility Study
2. Track Community Solar and Wind Initiatives
3. Prepare a Microgrid Feasibility Study
4. Prepare Renewable Energy Design and Development Guidelines and Zoning Regulations Applicable to the Unincorporated County
5. Increase the County's Renewable Energy Generation, Transmission, Use and Storage
6. Develop Strategies to Address Barriers to Alternative Fuel Deployment
7. Promote Vetted Renewable Energy Finance Mechanisms such as Property Assessed Clean Energy Programs, Bonds, Peer-to-Peer Lending or Crowdfunding, Among Others
8. Develop and Implement a Renewable Energy Education and Outreach Strategy
9. Develop and Implement a Strategy to Support Renewable Energy Legislation that benefits San Diego County
10. Establish a Sustainability Taskforce within the County's Existing Organizational Framework
11. Participate in the Creation of a New Regional Energy Network

ANALYSIS

The Chamber is supportive of efforts to diversify our regional energy portfolio in compliance with State law. The Chamber's Energy & Water Committee voted on December 1, 2016 to take a "support with recommendations" position and provided the following recommendations as the County moves forward with this plan:

1. The County should initiate and lead a regional and collaborative dialogue about the best ways to reduce carbon emissions by prioritizing the transportation sector. Transportation is where the most greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions occur, both region-wide and within the unincorporated areas. This dialogue should include increasing the use of energy storage and alternative fuels such as biofuels and transportation electrification consistent with state law. We urge the County to work with San Diego Gas & Electric, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), municipalities, and other government agencies and stakeholders to develop a truly inclusive approach that respects the geographic and economic diversity of the region.
2. County priorities should be based on the most cost-effective strategies to reduce emissions, minimizing risk, and maintain flexibility. The analysis to make such determinations should be performed by qualified and unbiased specialists.
3. As the County Planning Commission recognized, the County should continue to explore all opportunities for increasing renewable energy including through future and existing programs already authorized by the State and offered by San Diego Gas & Electric.