

SoCalREN Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 31st, 2026
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Zoom

Attendees

#	Name	Organization
1	Lujuana Medina	County of Los Angeles
2	Minh Le	County of Los Angeles
3	Tessa Charnofsky	County of Los Angeles
4	Shelley Osborn	County of Los Angeles
5	Audrey Bragg	County of Los Angeles
6	Tory Coffin	County of Los Angeles
7	Mark Blakely	County of Los Angeles
8	Nora Gutierrez	California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
9	Benjamin Lucha	City of Victorville
10	Tara Tisopulos	County of Orange
11	Sheen Sidhu	County of Orange
12	Selene L. Delafontaine	City of Irvine
13	Joslyn Fritz	City of Irvine
14	Joe Susca	City of Culver City
15	Benjamin Lucha	City of Victorville
16	Mike Maestas	Cucamonga Valley Water District
17	Sumi Gant	Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG)
18	Natalie Hernandez	GCCOG

19	Benjamin Druyon	Western Riverside COG
20	Eleanor Murphy	South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG)
21	Kim Fuentes	SBCCOG
22	Shawn Fujioka	SBCCOG
23	Mackenzie Bolger	San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG)
24	Natalie Arreaga	SGVCOG
25	Jess Blackwell	High Sierra Energy Foundation (HSEF)
26	Pam Bold	HSEF
27	Wendy Angel	Emerald Cities
28	Shanette Anderson	Emerald Cities
29	Rosie Kang	Willdan
30	Pranesh Venugopal	Orange County Power Authority (OCPA)
31	Nataly Morales	OCPA
32	Courtney Owen	ICF
33	Renee Daigneault	ICF
34	Savi Bassa	ICF
35	Craig Perkins	The Energy Coalition (TEC)
36	Bex Hausheer	TEC
37	Laurel Rothschild	TEC
38	Ivana Dorin	TEC
39	Mallory Schaefer	TEC
40	Allison Hart	TEC

Notes/Key Takeaways

- Ivana Dorin (TEC) began the meeting by reviewing the following administrative items:
 - Introductions/logos of invited participants
 - Advisory Committee Members
 - Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG)
 - Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG)
 - South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG)
 - Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG)
 - San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG)
 - City of Culver City
 - City of Santa Barbara
 - City of Victorville - highlighted Ben Lucha as a returning member, previously with the City of Palmdale
 - County of Santa Barbara
 - City of Irvine
 - Clean Power Alliance
 - Orange County Power Authority
 - County of Orange
 - Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
 - San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
 - Ventura County Regional Energy Authority
 - Invited Guests
 - California Public Utilities Commission
 - California Climate & Energy Collaborative
 - California Climate and Energy Collaborative
 - CalChoice
 - Grounded Research
 - ILLUME
 - SoCalREN Staff, Implementers & Regional Partners
 - County of Los Angeles (LAC)
 - The Energy Coalition (TEC)
 - ICF
 - High Sierra Energy Foundation (HSEF)
 - San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization (SJVCEO)
 - Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC)
 - Lincus Incorporated
 - Willdan
 - USGBC - CA
 - Purpose of Advisory Committee
 - Guide and advise
 - Collaborate and innovate
 - Be informed
 - Be an advocate

- Meeting agenda review
- SoCalREN Welcome (Minh Le, LA County)
 - We are currently doing really well on metrics and working to deliver results right now, so we are able to continue with the new programs in the business plan.
- Policy Updates (Tessa Charnofsky, LA County)
 - Legislative Calendar, 2026:
 - Jan 5—Legislature reconvenes
 - Jan 10- Governor introduces budget
 - Feb 20—Last day for bills to be introduced
 - May 15– May revision
 - June 15—Budget Bill must be passed
 - August 31—Last day for each house to pass bills
 - Sept 30—Last day for Governor to sign or veto bills
 - See slides for the list of State Legislators LA County met with in 2025
 - Second year of a two-year session Bills of Concern
 - AB-2508 Public Utilities Public Purpose Programs Fund. Asm Hoover (hearing April 8): Requires the CPUC to allocate the monies in the newly formed Public Purpose Programs Fund for certain public purpose programs and programs administered by electrical regional energy networks. The bill would require the Controller to transfer funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to the fund.
 - SB-1219 Energy efficiency programs: discontinuance of administration. Sen Strickland: Requires the CPUC to consider and approve an electrical or gas corporation’s application to discontinue administration of an energy efficiency program or an energy efficiency portfolio because the program is not cost effective, not reliable, or, in the case of an electrical corporation, because the program is not being used to meet unmet resource needs in its integrated resources planning framework, as provided.
 - AB 2408 Energy billing. Asm DeMaio: Requires the CPUC to ensure each electrical and gas corporation disclose all public purpose program charges to ratepayers, including an itemized list of each PPP funded through the ratepayers’ bills. Requires the commission to ensure each electrical and gas corporation provides an annual PPP statement to ratepayers and maintains an internet website displaying certain information about all PPP. Requires the CPUC to establish a mechanism to allow ratepayers to opt out of funding PPP that are not expressly required by statute.
 - SB 905 –Electricity Cost Savings Sen Josh Becker
 - This bill would require the Energy Commission, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), to develop and implement the Policy-Oriented and Wildfire Electric Reimbursement (POWER) Program to reduce the costs to ratepayers by providing reimbursement to electrical corporations and local publicly owned electric utilities for expenditures driven by public policy goals that provide a benefit to the general public.

- What about data centers/AI?
 - Concerns: higher load, higher rates, spiking bills, diesel back up power air pollution more emissions as power demand surges, water demands.
 - Little Hoover Commission Report Recommendations
 - Large data centers should pay the full cost of the infrastructure and grid services they require.
 - Create a special electricity rate category for extremely large power users that would require prepayment for grid infrastructure, contributions toward wildfire safety costs and commitments to pay for a share of the power capacity they request.
 - “The recommendations put forward by the Little Hoover Commission are one hundred percent aligned with the Assembly’s priorities,” said Assemblymember Cottie Petrie Norris, chair of the house’s energy and utilities committee. “We are moving expeditiously to pass a package of bills that will protect Californians from any rate increases and ensure that data centers pay their fair share.”
- Data Center Bills
 - SB 887, Padilla. California Environmental Quality Act: environmental leadership development projects: data centers: clean energy powerplant projects.
 - A data center project certified by the lead agency to meet all of the following conditions:
 - (i) Pays the full cost of interconnection to prevent cost shifts to other ratepayers; does not increase fossil fuel consumption within the state; Includes zero-carbon energy storage with at least four hours of capacity; uses onsite zero-carbon energy storage to provide demand response services; relies on zero-carbon generation located behind the meter to the maximum extent feasible; uses recycled water and water-efficient technology or waterless cooling systems; will rely on 100 percent zero-carbon electricity resources (ix) Contains a community benefits program.
 - AB 1577, Asm Bauer-Kahan. Data centers: monthly reporting
 - This bill would require the commission to establish a process for the owner of a data center, as defined, to submit specified information to the commission on a monthly basis, including, among other information, the data center’s power usage effectiveness, water usage effectiveness, and total water consumption and the quantity of fuel consumed by onsite generators or other fuel-based energy systems, as specified.
 - SB 978, Sen Perez. Large-scale energy facilities: labor: electricity rates.
 - This bill would require the PUC to establish a special rate structure for large-scale energy users, to protect other customers of electrical corporations, prevent prohibit cost shifts to those other customers, and require large-scale energy users to pay for the electrical corporations’ upfront costs of transmission or distribution infrastructure upgrades

necessary for the provision of electrical service to those users. The bill would require the construction of those facilities to comply with certain labor requirements.

- Mackenzie Bolger (SGVCOG): We take a lot of legislation to our Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee. Please let us know if there are any specific ones we should support or oppose.
- SoCalREN Business Plan Application Summary (Lujana Medina, LA County)
 - Overview & Strategic Priorities
 - Combined filing covering SoCalREN's eight-year (2028–2035) Strategic Business Plan and four-year (2028–2031) Energy Efficiency Portfolio Plan
 - Both the eight-year Strategic Plan and four-year Portfolio Plan:
 - Advance energy affordability and reduce energy burden
 - Prioritize service DAC, HTR, and other underserved communities
 - Optimize community benefits from every dollar invested
 - Deliver a cost-effective Resource Acquisition portfolio
 - Support building decarbonization and electrification readiness
 - Simplify participation through consolidated programs and streamlined delivery
 - Integrate energy efficiency with resilience and load flexibility
 - Strengthen workforce capacity to create local jobs and support implementation
 - Holding a webinar on the Business Plan on April 7th from 9:30 to 11 AM for all stakeholders
 - Changes from the 2024–2027 Portfolio Cycle
 - ADDITIONAL SERVICES: New Programs Added for Commercial, Public, Residential, and WE&T Sectors
 - Commercial Resiliency Program
 - Public Agency Load Flexibility Program
 - Residential Resiliency (Single-Family) Program
 - Construction Project Management Pathway (WE&T)
 - Mackenzie Bolger (SGVCOG): Are you working with Pasadena City College on the Construction PM program? They're launching an accelerated program for this.
 - Lujana Medina (LA County): They should be included in our network of 12 community colleges we work with
 - SIMPLIFIED DELIVERY: Program Consolidations for Public and Commercial Sector
 - Water Infrastructure Program and NMEC consolidated into Streamlined Savings Pathway
 - Underserved Schools SEM and Water/Wastewater SEM combined into Underserved Communities SEM

- CA Green Business Network closed as a standalone program; functions integrated elsewhere
 - Kim Fuentes (SBCCOG): How will you be integrating the CA Green Business Network program?
 - Lujana Medina (LA County): We don't leverage technical assistance or other Green Business Network program support because it's already offered in the Small Business Energy Advisor program. LA County does still pay the licensing fee for the CAGBN tool businesses use for document certification.
- Please see slides for sector specific program flow chart
 - Lujana Medina (LA County): We're going to try new program models in the market, and if the market is receptive, we can continue and expand. Anything that has been removed was either not meeting community needs or was not receptive to the market
- Budget Overview
 - 2028–2031 Budget Request: \$374.6 million
 - Public sector receives the largest share of funding
 - Residential funding increases across the planning period
 - Commercial and Ag funding targets HTR and DAC markets
 - Cross-cutting funding includes finance, workforce, and community-based delivery
 - Making sure funding is distributed equitably across all 13 territories
 - Minh Le (LA County): What we're requesting is a 5% increase from the previous filing. It's important as a team to deliver on 2026 targets, as it is the last year the Commission will see before seeing the new budget request
 - Lujana Medina (LA County): Aiming for 290 million in TSB
 - We are seeing that resource acquisition programs as of 2025 will be cost-effective
 - Minh Le (LA County): It's important to show we're delivering on the promises that the RENs were founded on
 - 2032–2035 Budget Forecast: \$463.4 million
 - Scaling programs that demonstrate cost-effectiveness
 - Increased use of layered funding
 - Long-term workforce and market capacity development
 - 2028–2035 Total: \$838 million
- SoCalREN's Policy Recommendations

- The following policy recommendations were included in the Application:
 - Adopt and implement a REN Total Benefit Metric
 - Allow EE incentives for electrification replacing non-regulated fuels
 - Establish streamlined and predictable custom project approval timelines
 - Establish NTG value of 1.0 for custom projects meeting POE standards
 - Allow minor remediations as eligible EE costs
 - Allow limited battery storage support for rural and PSPS-impacted customers
- Please see slides for calendar and next steps
- Natalie Hernandez (GCCOG): COG met with NORESO on how to integrate ESCO services in our region
 - How could that fit into the business plan?
 - We do leverage ESCOs in the EE Project Delivery Program
 - Ivana Dorin (TEC) will follow up after the meeting to connect Natalie with the correct contacts (ACTION ITEM)
 - Pam Bold (HSEF): Guidance on RPARs working with ESCOs would be a good topic for a future RPAR meeting
- REN Benefits Calculator Overview (Lujana Medina, LA County)
 - 2025 California State Auditor Report on CPUC EE Programs
 - Recommendations
 - Legislature: To better ensure that energy efficiency funds are either used prudently [...] and to ensure that the CPUC does not continue to authorize efficiency programs that do not meet energy-savings goals and cost-effectiveness measures, the Legislature should consider amending state law to require the CPUC to eliminate funding for chronically underperforming efficiency programs.
 - Commission: To improve its oversight of the effectiveness of utility program portfolios and individual efficiency programs, the CPUC should begin monitoring the actual performance of utilities' program portfolios and individual efficiency programs.
 - Annually evaluate the performance of each utilities' program portfolios to determine whether they are achieving energy-savings goals and are cost-effective;
 - Annually review the data utilities submit about energy savings and cost-effectiveness for all efficiency programs to identify those that are underperforming
 - Work with utilities to determine why efficiency programs may be underperforming and propose corrective actions to address the causes of underperforming programs

- Measuring SoCalREN Benefits
 - The SoCalREN Portfolio provides tangible benefits that are not captured in TSB
 - The benefits that our team is calculating would be added to TSB
- Benefit types: Identified benefits can be categorized into ten benefit types
 - Cost Savings: Bill savings, labor support, reduced maintenance costs
 - Direct Financial Support: Grants, rebates, and incentive
 - Revenue Increase: Increases in sales revenue
 - Local Economy: Economic benefits including wages and increased spending
 - Community Support: Avoided damages from reducing emissions and avoided costs of actions needed to help community meet GHG reduction or resiliency goals
 - Education and Training: Formal and informal learning about energy efficiency
 - Health: Individual and community health improvements
 - Building and Housing Conditions: Increases in property values and stable, more comfortable, and more resilient buildings
 - Community Wellbeing: Reduced need for social services; improved community resiliency and emergency preparedness
 - Natural Resources Conservation: Reduction in infrastructure and other costs due to reduced water and other natural resource use
- The calculator uses secondary information and program data to estimate the value of quantifiable benefits
 - Using secondary research, we defined values and approaches to calculate dollar value of benefits (wherever possible)
 - From program and SoCalREN data we pull in specific inputs for each program/year
 - Together, these create estimates of the dollar value of each benefit
 - These individual benefits roll up to portfolio-level benefits
- Please see the slides for the graphs on overall benefits by category and sector
- The calculator will be utilized to output the “REN Total Benefit” metric
 - Pranesh Venugopal (OCA): Are the cost savings coming from the non-claimable measures/projects?
 - Lujana Medina (LA County): Yes, in the non-energy category
- OCA Community Power Plan (Pranesh Venugopal & Nataly Morales Sandoval, OCA)
 - Orange County Power Authority Background
 - Not-for-profit energy provider
 - Alternative to for-profit utility (SCE)
 - Energy procured from renewable sources with the goal of helping cities, residents, and businesses reduce their carbon footprint
 - Supporting over 181,000 customers in Fullerton, Buena Park, and Irvine; Fountain Valley coming online in 2027!
 - Three renewable energy plans to meet customer environmental and financial goals
 - What is Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)?

- Assembly Bill 117 passed in 2002 establishing Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) to introduce competition and choice into the energy market
- AB 117 allows communities to join and provide residents and businesses the opportunity to choose their electric provider, and how much renewable energy they want to put onto the grid
- A growing movement in California: 15 million people in 200 communities are currently benefiting from CCAs
- CCAs are 26% of the state's energy load and growing!
- Community Power Plan Purpose
 - Provide a strategic framework to create and run programs to deliver local, clean, and equitable energy
 - Early short-term programs successful, but not driven by direct community input
 - Desire for strategic, long-term program roadmap that aligns with customer needs, gaps, and implementation feasibility
 - Reinforce OCPA's role as a community-driven, not-for-profit agency reinvesting in local priorities
- See the slides for the timeline
- Community Power Plan Defined
 - The OCPA Community Power Plan provides a strategic framework to develop and implement programs that meet the specific needs of OCPA member communities
 - The results are broad program categories prioritized based on the results from five (5) in-depth analysis including community desire, ability to fill existing gaps and receive outside funding support, and cost-benefit
 - The high priority programs meet community needs with a tighter development and implementation timeline, while requiring manageable internal resources and external expertise
- Community Needs Assessment
 - 1,244 survey responses
 - 25 tabling events
 - 7 listening sessions
 - 54,740 residents reached via newsletters and outreach
- Strategies to overcome outreach barriers
 - Trust/lack of awareness: Contracted with a Community-Based Organization for outreach and collaborated with established outreach partners to gain trust and efficiently reach a wide audience representative of OCPA's diverse communities, such as at food distribution centers and local schools
 - Language barriers: Developed the survey in multiple languages and worked with outreach partners to promote and offer survey completion support in multiple languages
 - Revisited translations to ensure language and flier images was culturally accurate to the community

- Technology literacy: Multiple methods of engagement and surveys (posted fliers in convening spaces, in-person and paper survey options at Tabeing events)
 - Limited time: Compensated participants for survey participation (1 per participant for workshops and roundtables, opportunity to win gift cards)
 - Broad Outreach: Collected demographic data to track survey participants within and outside OCPA member cities and additionally track communities of concern
 - A mid-point assessment was incorporated to identify gaps and refine outreach efforts accordingly
- Operational Alignment Assessment
 - 6 OCPA staff respondents
 - 5 OCPA staff and city staff respondents
 - 2 survey types
- Existing Programs Assessment
 - 44 existing energy programs assessed
 - 16 different program administrators
 - 7 characteristics evaluated for each program
- Funding Opportunities Assessment
 - 2 phases of analysis and research
 - Identify potential funding
 - Align with community needs
 - 23 funding sources researched for opportunities
 - 5 distinct funding opportunities identified as highly suitable for OCPAs consideration
- Cost-Benefit Analysis Assessment
 - Develop CBA scoring tool
 - Scoring categories
 - Identify programs
 - Community Needs Weightings
 - Scoring committee evaluation
 - Comprised of energy program experts with a collective 87 years of experience
- Please see slides for Community Power Plan Results table
- Finalization process
 - The plan was brought to stakeholder groups in draft formats, ensuring all voices were captured and that the final Community Power Plan is transparent, community-informed, well-vetted, and aligned with organizational goals
 - Community Advisory Committee: Presented plan for feedback December 18, 2025
 - Public Review and Feedback: Open to the public for two weeks in December
 - Board of Directors: Presented and adopted February 9, 2026
 - Publication: Published February 13, 2026
 - Program Development: First program launched March 12, 2026
- Please see slides for the Community Power Plan Landing Page and [Dashboard](#)

- Rollout strategy
 - High -Priority Programs
 - Direct-to-renter electrification and demand response (DR) program
 - Comprehensive energy efficiency and electrification program
 - Medium -Priority Programs
 - Refrigeration efficiency and electrification program
 - Low-Priority Programs
 - Sector-specific demand response (DR)
 - Strategic energy management (SEM) for industrial facilities
 - Financing and incentive stacking
 - Upcoming programs
 - High Priority Program: Renter Energy Efficiency Program
 - Provides renters with no-cost portable HVAC systems and batteries for home comfort without landlord approval, wiring changes, or added costs
 - Combat Low Program Awareness: Energy education webinar
 - Online webinar hosted by staff to empower customers with education about their energy bills and help them manage electricity costs effectively
 - Provide Hands-On Experience: Energy efficiency trailer
 - A mobile BuildSMART trailer through U.S. Green Business Council going to community events in OCPA member cities to demonstrate real-world solutions.
 - Questions:
 - Ben Lucha (Victorville): How does the battery work? Is it plugged into a GFCI plug?
 - Pranesh Venugopal (OCPA): It can plug into a regular 120-volt outlet
- Closing Remarks (Lujuana Medina, LA County)
 - Please continue to advocate for all the great work we're doing together
 - Please complete the [Q1 Meeting Survey](#) (ACTION ITEM)
 - 2026 Proposed meeting schedule
 - Q1- March 31st, 2026 (virtual) - COMPLETE
 - Q2- June 30th, 2026 (virtual)
 - Q3- September 2nd, 2026 (in-person, Frontier Project, CVWD)
 - Updated calendar invite will be sent
 - Q4- December 9th, 2026 (virtual)
 - SoCalREN Podcast and Social Media
 - Don't forget to follow us on social media and to check out the updated SoCalREN podcast Hi, Energy!
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Twitter](#)

- [Instagram](#)
- [Online Resource for Advisory Committee Members](#)
- Upcoming SCR events:
 - AWWA Water Conference of the West 2026: April 6th - 9th 2026
 - Urban Renewable Energy Summit: April 18, 2026
 - CCEC Forum: June 24-25, 2026
- The Q1 SoCalREN Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned