

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 3**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE ENERGY SUPPLY STUDY AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

On May 24, 2023 (09), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed an energy supply study, hereinafter referred to as the Energy Access, Resilience, and Capacity Study (Energy ARC), to research and provide recommendations for renewable energy generation, transmission, distribution, and storage capacity in the San Diego region that considers resiliency from power outages, economic benefits and costs, and local community context. Energy ARC will inform next steps the County and other regional partners can take to optimize the development of renewable energy systems that meet both future energy demands and climate action goals. On April 10, 2024 (10), the Board approved the award of a contract with the Alliance for Sustainable Energy LLC, the contracting authority for the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR), previously known as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), a national laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy, to procure services for this study led by the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ) and to return to the Board to approve continuation of this work each year. The contract was executed on April 28, 2025, for a performance period of 24 months.

NLR is leading the analysis of current and future energy generation, transmission, distribution, and storage capacity in the San Diego region using advanced proprietary and open source modeling software. NLR's work for the County on this project consists of three research tasks: 1) research and baseline analysis; 2) capacity analysis; and 3) barriers and impact analysis. All research tasks, along with feedback and community-led recommendations gathered throughout the process, will be incorporated into a full report that is anticipated to be completed by April 2027. Based on the initial findings of the capacity analysis, which will be completed in May 2026, less than one-third of the region's potential for infill solar has been installed.

OSEJ is complementing NLR's work by leading regional engagement and collaboration to understand the unique perspectives of diverse communities throughout the region and co-create possible paths forward for appropriately-scaled energy generation and storage. This engagement is balancing current and future regional energy demands with community priorities. Interviews, focus groups, meetings and workshops, listening sessions, and an online Engage page are structured to form meaningful connections and learn alongside four key interest-holder groups: 1) regional energy providers; 2) local and Tribal governments, and regional agencies; 3) subject matter experts and technical practitioners; and 4) community-based organizations and the general public. Based on outreach and engagement to-date, preliminary considerations have been identified to reflect the role key interest-holder groups play in the regional energy system, successes shared in advancing equitable and clean renewable energy projects, and opportunities shared for collective action.

While staff has already identified several preliminary findings from outreach and engagement, key considerations that are shaping the final report findings and continued coordination with interest-holder groups include:

- Identifying data sharing opportunities between regional energy providers and with local and regional governments to support greater communication of transmission capacity, and building and understanding of where local generation and storage could defer potential infrastructure upgrade costs.
- Developing shared language for local and regional governments to evolve climate action or sustainability goals to achieve 100 percent renewable energy to align with regional energy provider priorities to purchase locally generated clean, renewable energy.
- Involving Tribal governments in all energy conversations at the regional scale to continue showcasing best practice microgrid and other clean, renewable energy technologies currently developed on Tribal lands. Renewable energy generation and storage can also create additional economic benefits for tribes that advance Tribal sovereignty.
- Including impacts of no project options when developing and sharing renewable energy generation and storage projects at neighborhood or community scales to understand how projects could support or strain the existing infrastructure and grid.
- Creating consistent policies, permitting practices, and development requirements for renewable energy generation and storage systems across the region.

Today's actions are for the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) to receive an update on the energy supply study and direct continuation of this work through April 2027, the contracted Estimated Performance Period. With Board approval to continue the Energy ARC study, key activities planned for the second year of work include: completion of NLR's analysis and reporting; additional engagement with and outreach to key interest-holder groups and a return back to the Board in late Spring 2027.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**  
**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find that the proposed actions are not a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).
2. Receive an update on the Energy Access, Resilience, and Capacity Study.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to continue development of the Energy Access, Resilience, and Capacity Study under the existing contract with Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC through April 2027, the contracted Estimated Performance Period.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

As the County continues its decarbonization efforts, it is imperative to ensure that actions are equitable. The Energy Access, Resilience, and Capacity Study analyzes how rooftop and infill clean renewable energy options might impact factors such as ratepayer costs, grid reliability, resiliency, equity, and the environment. The study assesses access to rooftop and infill solar and battery storage for low income, vulnerable, and environmental justice communities impacted disproportionately by climate change. It also evaluates the trade-offs of such infill installations on homeowners and businesses.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

This action supports the County of San Diego Sustainability Goal #3, to transition to a green, emissions-free economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support green job creation and workforce development, and prepare for impacts of a changing climate; and Sustainability Goal #4, to protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in the region, with a focus on collaborating with community partners and advocating for environmental justice for communities that have been disproportionately impacted. This study builds on the research of the Regional Decarbonization Framework Technical Report to analyze the local conditions relating to residential, commercial, and other infill clean renewable energy generation.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with today’s recommendations. Funds for the 24-month contract costs and revenue of \$500,000 is included in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Operational Plan for the Land Use and Environmental Group Executive Office (LUEG EXO). The funding source is one-time General Purpose Revenue allocated to LUEG EXO for the Regional Decarbonization Framework. To date, approximately 30 percent of the contract amount has been invoiced. If the project continues into its second year, it will be supported by the remaining funds included in the budget. There may be potential fiscal impacts related to future recommendations which staff will return to the Board for consideration and approval. But at this time, there will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Lawson-Remer, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Aguirre, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond  
ABSENT: Anderson

State of California)  
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed  
by Andrew Potter