



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors

From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department

Date: August 1, 2017

Subject: Application to the Solar Energy Innovation Network

RECOMMENDATION(S):

AUTHORIZE the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of interest to The Solar Foundation in support of their application to the Solar Energy Innovation Network program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for funding to investigate how to remove institutional barriers to expanding deployment of solar energy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Should The Solar Foundation be selected to participate in the Solar Energy Innovation Network, the County would be expected to make an in-kind contribution of staff time. The Department of Conservation and Development anticipates that two senior staff and one Deputy Director would each spend 2-3 hours per month on this project for 18 to 21 months, with one of them attending quarterly project team meetings to include travel costs. The Department would cover these staff expenses 50% from General Fund revenues allocated for the Sustainability Coordinator position and 50% from the Land Development Fund.

BACKGROUND:

The Solar Energy Innovation Network (SEIN) is a three-year program, sponsored by the

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **08/01/2017** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: August 1, 2017

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: Stephanie Mello, Deputy

Contact: Jody London,
925-674-7871

cc:

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), designed to remove soft cost (non-hardware cost) barriers to wide-scale integration of distributed solar photovoltaics (PV) within the U.S. electricity system. The program supports selected project teams that aim to address these barriers through in-person, facilitated peer-learning and targeted research and analysis over an 18-21 month period. Project teams will be grouped together based on common solar market challenges to facilitate peer exchange and address similar analytical needs. The program design

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

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encourages development and replication of innovative solutions through active sharing of lessons-learned.

This program is designed to facilitate solutions to solar market barriers, recognizing that hardware price declines on their own are insufficient to achieve wide-scale integration of solar PV in the U.S. It has been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from states, counties, and local entities for data-based solutions. SEIN builds on successful elements of past and current programs at DOE and NREL, such as the SunShot Catalyst Energy Prize Program and the Solar Technical Assistance Team, which bring together diverse groups of stakeholders striving to bring novel solutions to bear in the market.

The Solar Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing solar energy use worldwide, is putting together a team of local governments from across the country to examine how to overcome soft costs associated with greater deployment of solar energy and energy storage, particularly in the context of climate resiliency. Contra Costa County would help explore issues related to siting, zoning, and permitting. The Solar Foundation is interested in the work DCD is proposing be done with disadvantaged communities as part of an upcoming, proposed study of opportunities and constraints for expanding generation of renewable energy in the County.

Benefits to the County of participating in this project, if selected, include 1) helping Contra Costa County plan for larger and more complex renewable energy systems (i.e., including storage); 2) free access to the resources of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for data, modelling, etc.; 3) learning from other local governments working on these issues; and 4) meeting with other teams working on related issues.

At this time, the County is being asked only to participate in The Solar Foundation's application, which is due August 1. The Solar Foundation asks for a letter of interest from each team member.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Failure by the County to participate in The Solar Foundation's application to the Solar Energy Innovation Network means the County would lose an opportunity to access the data and modeling resources of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and receive other technical assistance that would support the County's climate action goals.

ATTACHMENTS

Letter of Interest