



## **GeoZone Public Partners Planning Meeting Summary**

March 9, 2022 10:30am – Virtually Hosted on Zoom

### ***Attendees***

Geof Syphers, Sonoma Clean Power Authority  
Ryan Tracey, Sonoma Clean Power Authority  
Cordel Stillman, Sonoma Clean Power Authority  
Barbara Lee, County of Sonoma  
Janelle Rau, County of Mendocino  
Terry Crowley, City of Healdsburg Electric Utility Department  
Cindy Sauers, City of Ukiah Electric Utility Department  
Rob Bamford, North Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District  
Tennis Wick, Permit Sonoma  
John Mack, Permit Sonoma  
Robert Pennington, Permit Sonoma

### ***Summary***

Sonoma Clean Power presented information on the long-term value of building additional local geothermal capacity. Presentation material included detail on the imperative of climate action, resiliency and economic benefits of locally sited generation, the extent of the regional geothermal resource, and new enabling technologies from the geothermal industry. The GeoZone was formed to help local agencies coordinate on what kinds of geothermal they want to see built, and to support the transition away from fossil fuel power sources.

Meeting participants indicated that the GeoZone is well aligned with objectives of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, the Northern Air Pollution Control District and municipal utilities in Healdsburg and Ukiah in addressing climate change.

Discussion during the meeting provided valuable feedback on important considerations in progressing the GeoZone initiative:

- North Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District described the historical concern for downwind emissions from the current Geysers operation, particularly in Lake County. The emissions have been tracked through the Geysers Area Monitoring (GAM) program and have decreased over time, but should still be an important consideration in development activity.

- North Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District stressed that new technology needs to be vetted for operational environmental impacts vs. design concept (example: fugitive emissions on binary plants that are marketed as emissions-free)
- Permit Sonoma explained that the current Geysers development operates under a 50-year-old CEQA analysis and any updated analyses for new development would be more sophisticated and require additional mitigations.
- Permit Sonoma suggested project selection, location and types should be significantly CEQA-driven and permitting strategy should be phased: short-term focus on smaller impact projects (repurposing existing facilities, using abandoned pads, etc.) and long-term evaluation of programmatic EIR.
- All participants recognized the benefit of smaller and more modular surface technology that minimizes land use and environmental impacts—particularly if the facilities are in a disturbed area.
- Sonoma County and Permit Sonoma highlighted that project evaluation should consider water usage given the new interest in diverting water flows toward Ag.
- All participants agreed that grant funding applications should be regional and include support from environmental/regulatory stakeholders like Permit Sonoma

The meeting ended with a short update from Sonoma Clean Power on the expected release of a solicitation for private partners in March 2022. The group agreed to reconvene in approximately two months to further discuss the GeoZone initiative.