



Staff Report – Item 03

To: Sonoma Clean Power Authority Community Advisory Committee

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Issue: Receive Geothermal Opportunity Zone Update

Date: April 16, 2026

Background

The Geothermal Opportunity Zone (GeoZone) is SCP's initiative to secure affordable, reliable clean energy for our customers by building 600 megawatts of new geothermal power capacity in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. This will eventually enable SCP to phase out its dependence on natural gas power plants for reliability. The Community Advisory Committee (Committee) meetings are a regularly scheduled public forum for the community to receive updates and provide input on the GeoZone. The updates provided to the Committee each month, and minutes from any discussion are posted on SCP's website at <https://sonomacleanpower.org/geozone-public-updates>. Staff incorporate any feedback received from the Committee presentation into the monthly updates to the Board of Directors. Additional background on the GeoZone can be found on the GeoZone webpage at <https://sonomacleanpower.org/geozone>.

Partner Updates

SCP is actively collaborating with Eavor on siting opportunities for a GeoZone project. Staff have begun leveraging expertise from SCP's Capital Projects team to identify constraints and opportunities for locating the project. Additionally, Eavor and the University of Colorado publicly released a feasibility study for locating an Eavor system on campus ([linked here](#)), that provides a good guide for the types of considerations that influence favorable siting conditions.

Meanwhile, staff continue to organize meetings with prospective industry partners for bilateral negotiations. Early conversations are focused on understanding partner capabilities and synergies with SCP's objectives for the GeoZone.

California Energy Commission Integrated Energy Policy Report

The California Energy Commission (CEC) is including an assessment of challenges and

opportunities for geothermal development in California in its 2026 Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR – [link here to scoping order](#)). The IEPR is the primary venue at the CEC for assessing the state energy system and identifying legislative and regulatory opportunities. SCP staff believe that the IEPR assessment has the potential to accomplish many of the objective of [AB 526](#), which was the legislation SCP sponsored last year to develop a strategic plan for in-state geothermal development that unfortunately didn't pass out of appropriations.

SCP submitted comments ([link here](#)) to the 2026 IEPR docket expressing strong support of the CEC's decision to focus the geothermal development report on in-state opportunities. Recent procurement of geothermal resources to meet the state's needs as been concentrated unnecessarily out-of-state and focusing on in-state barriers and opportunities creates an opportunity to directly leverage the 2026 IEPR assessment in enabling development that can provide local reliability, access to more resources, and economic benefits.

Sonoma-Lake-Mendocino Proactive Regional Geothermal Planning Project

Sonoma County executed its grant agreement with the California Energy Commission for the Sonoma-Lake-Mendocino Proactive Regional Geothermal Planning Project and kicked-off the project in early April. The project team includes Sonoma County, Mendocino County, Sonoma Clean Power, and the National Lab of the Rockies (NLR). The CEC is providing \$1.36 million in funding for county staff time, funding modeling and stakeholder engagement training from NLR, high-resolution surface mapping and analysis, biological surveys, and tribal reconnaissance. The project will develop products that are useful to both industry and county permitting staff to characterize the opportunity to site next-geothermal geothermal projects in the region.

In 2026, the focus of the project will be on NLR's development of a three-dimensional thermal model for the region to characterize subsurface potential. The project team will also organize a field trip to a next-generation geothermal project site and begin collecting best practices and lessons learned for geothermal permitting practices. SCP is supporting the project through an in-kind contribution of staff time, valued at \$164,000. The final report for the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2028.

Agency Goals

The GeoZone activities are directly related to the 2026 agency goal to continue progress on the GeoZone, which SCP sees as a key initiative in supporting deployment of technology that will be critical to meeting long-term climate goals, addressing affordability, and providing reliability while creating local economic opportunities.

Attachments

- None.