



## Staff Report - Item 02

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**To: Sonoma Clean Power Authority Community Advisory Committee**

**From: Ryan Tracey, Director of Planning & Analytics  
Geof Syphers, Chief Executive Officer**

**Issue: Receive GeoZone Update**

**Date: April 21, 2022**

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Last October, the SCP Board of Directors passed a resolution creating a Geothermal Opportunity Zone (GeoZone) and inviting Sonoma County, Mendocino County, and Lake County to join SCP in exploring expansion of local geothermal power capacity.

Following the passage of SCP's resolution forming the GeoZone, both Mendocino County and Sonoma County passed resolutions formally joining the initiative. The Lake County Board of Supervisors decided to not join at this time.

The purpose of the GeoZone is to develop the resources necessary to allow SCP to stop relying on natural gas power plants altogether. Resources like wind, solar and battery storage have provided most of the climate progress in California so far, but none of those resources allow natural gas power plants to be switched off altogether. Many gas-fired power plants run all of the time at a minimum setting, waiting to be dispatched for reliability when it is cloudy or a through a long winter storm. Resources that run nearly all of the time are needed to allow the total shutdown of those power plants, and locally geothermal is the most available kind of baseload renewable power.

The GeoZone is seeking to sustain the existing local geothermal production and add 500 MW of new geothermal capacity, focusing on low-water and low-impact technologies. SCP is working to form public-private partnerships with geothermal companies as providers of technology, experience, and capital. Through these partnerships and by serving as a buyer of geothermal energy and capacity, SCP is seeking to lower the costs and risks of developing geothermal energy.

SCP staff held an initial planning meeting with public partners in the GeoZone initiative on March 9, 2022. Attendees included representatives of Sonoma County, Mendocino County, Permit Sonoma, the North Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, and the municipal utilities of Ukiah and Healdsburg. SCP staff presented the motivation and objectives of the GeoZone and new enabling geothermal technologies. Discussion followed on organizational alignment and important considerations in progressing the GeoZone initiative including air emissions, permitting, water usage, and funding opportunities. The group will reconvene in two months to continue collaboration on the GeoZone.

SCP released a solicitation seeking private development partners on March 14, 2022. The solicitation is posted along with other background information on a new dedicated webpage for the GeoZone at <https://sonomacleanpower.org/geozone>. Responses to the solicitation are due April 29, 2022. Staff is currently expecting to select private development partners by June 2022.

Given the high level of activity in the GeoZone initiative, updates to the project will be regularly included in meetings of the Community Advisory Committee and Board of Directors.

**Attachments:**

None