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Sonoma Clean Power-Led Coalition Secures \$20 Million in State Funding to Advance California's Geothermal Energy Future

SANTA ROSA, Calif., Sept. 21, 2026 – [Sonoma Clean Power](#) (SCP), the public power provider for Sonoma and Mendocino counties, today announced a major milestone in California's clean energy transition as Gov. Newsom signed a final budget agreement committing an additional \$10 million for geothermal exploratory wells, bringing total state support to \$20 million. This significant commitment follows a sustained advocacy effort led by SCP and a diverse coalition of clean energy providers, organized labor, business leaders, and climate advocates.

The funding is designed to overcome the primary barrier to next-generation geothermal development: early-stage exploration risk. While California holds a vast, largely untapped geothermal resource, the complexity and high cost of drilling exploratory wells often prevent projects from accessing traditional financing.

"To maintain a reliable, 24/7 grid, California must replace polluting gas plants with clean baseload power. Utility customers are currently paying twice: once to keep old gas plants on standby, and again to fund clean energy. Retiring these facilities eliminates that double charge, protecting ratepayers while improving air quality and health in frontline communities," said Geof Syphers, CEO of Sonoma Clean Power. "This funding reduces early-stage risk and clears the path for next-generation geothermal right here in California."

The program builds on the federal Utah FORGE model, which used publicly funded research wells and open geologic data to de-risk project development that has unlocked billions in private investment and created hundreds of high-quality jobs. California's investment aims to spur similar development and strengthen the state's leadership in geothermal innovation. Leveraging a cost sharing model, the private sector will match the state's \$20 million investment, for a total of \$40 million in funding.

"Targeted state investment for early-stage geothermal exploration is essential for bringing more reliable, affordable clean energy onto California's grid," said Terra Rogers, senior director, Superhot Rock Geothermal at Clean Air Task Force. "We applaud the state's commitment to advancing technologies, like next-generation geothermal, that are needed to drastically reduce the cost of achieving the state's ambitious clean energy goals."

In addition to environmental benefits, geothermal expansion is expected to drive significant regional economic growth. "Next-generation geothermal has the potential to create well-paid, highly skilled careers in California," said Matt Cremins, director of the California-Nevada Conference of Operating Engineers. "This funding is an important step toward ensuring these long-term jobs come to our state and support local economies by providing work opportunities for California-based journeyman and apprentice construction workers."

Through its [GeoZone](#) initiative, SCP is working to develop up to 600 MW of local, next-generation geothermal energy to provide stable, carbon-free power to Sonoma and Mendocino counties. This new state funding directly supports those efforts by de-risking the subsurface in high-potential geologic regions.

This dedicated state funding builds on SCP's track record of advancing in-state geothermal, including key legislative support for measures like AB 1359 and AB 531 to streamline project permitting.

To secure this latest investment, Sonoma Clean Power assembled a diverse coalition of groups in support of the effort to secure state funding, including: Advanced Energy United, American Clean Power - California, Bay Area Council, BlueGreen Alliance, Brightline Defense, California Chamber of Commerce, California Community Choice Association, California Resources Corporation, California State Pipe Trades Council, Clean Air Task Force, Climate Action California, Climate Reality Project - Silicon Valley, Coalition of California Utility Employees, County of Imperial, Data Center Coalition, Environment California, Environmental Defense Fund, Geothermal Rising Action, Imperial Irrigation District, Industrious Labs, International Union of Operating Engineers, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Récolte Energy, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Jose Community Energy Advocates, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network, State Building and Construction Trades Council, The Climate Center, and Union of Concerned Scientists.

About Sonoma Clean Power

Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) is the public power provider for Sonoma and Mendocino counties, serving about half a million people. SCP invests in its communities through partnerships targeting climate solutions, education, and the fundamental needs of residents. Its EverGreen service is the only 100 percent locally generated energy option available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. To learn more, visit sonomacleanpower.org or call 1 (855) 202-2139.