



County of Sonoma  
State of California

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ATTEST: February 8, 2022  
SHERYL BRATTON, Clerk/Secretary  
BY *Noelle Francis*

Date: February 8, 2022

Item Number: 5

Resolution Number: 22-0035

4/5 Vote Required

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP IN THE SONOMA LAKE MENDOCINO GEOTHERMAL OPPORTUNITY ZONE**

**Whereas**, the Sonoma Clean Power Authority (SCPA) established the structure for a Geothermal Opportunity Zone (“GeoZone”) on October 7, 2021; and

**Whereas**, SCPA has invited the County of Sonoma to join the GeoZone to partner in exploring opportunities to accelerate the development of renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

**Whereas**, SCPA is a local government entity governed by representatives from the Counties and Cities of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties and an electricity provider serving customers in Sonoma County; and

**Whereas**, a world class geothermal resource exists in Sonoma, Lake, and Mendocino Counties with significant potential to provide clean baseload renewable energy that operates 24 hours per day 365 days per year; and

**Whereas**, the County of Sonoma recognizes that new more water-efficient technologies for generating geothermal power are needed; and

**Whereas**, the County of Sonoma wishes to explore geothermal power projects which provide benefits to its local community and do not exist solely to benefit people outside of Sonoma County; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma recognizes the high cost of electricity in California and supports opportunities to reduce energy cost through promoting technology development, identifying efficiencies of scale, and leveraging state and federal grant funding; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma owns and controls property which may have development potential for baseload renewable energy projects; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma recognizes the long permitting and development timelines for geothermal power projects; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma is well acquainted with the potential consequences to the environment and community of new resource development and expects to be directly engaged in the selection of projects with the aim of mitigating adverse impacts; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma shall retain its full rights to review and approve any project located within its jurisdiction;

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma has an interest in sharing information and working collaboratively together with the SCPA and the Counties of Mendocino and Lake; and

**Whereas,** the County of Sonoma wishes to join the geothermal opportunity zone as set forth in this Resolution;

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved**

1. The above Recitals are true and correct and incorporated by this reference.
2. The County of Sonoma joins the Sonoma Lake Mendocino Geothermal Opportunity Zone (“GeoZone”) established by SCPA. The boundary of the GeoZone in the County of Sonoma will initially include the full territory of Sonoma County. The GeoZone will be used to explore the potential development of geothermal energy resources within its boundaries. These activities may include identifying potential sites for new geothermal energy production and for the research of new and emerging geothermal technology,

collaboratively sharing information among the Counties, soliciting developers to propose new geothermal and other clean power resources, exploring a programmatic environmental impact report to reduce development risks and timelines, seeking federal and state funds and changes in policy to support geothermal development, and facilitating the use of the renewable energy output by customers in the Counties.

3. Activities shall not include any final commitment to develop geothermal energy resources at any site, which shall only be made by the Counties, and other applicable regulatory agencies after necessary environmental and similar review.
4. County staff is hereby authorized to take such administrative actions necessary to implement the GeoZone.

**Be It Further Resolved**

1. For the reasons set forth above, the adoption of this Resolution is not a “project” requiring environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15060, subdivision (c)(3) and §15378, subdivisions (a) and (b)(2), (b)(4) and (b)(5). Alternatively, the actions are statutorily exempt from CEQA review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines § 15262 and exempt under the “common sense” exemption identified in State CEQA Guidelines § 15061, subdivision (b)(3). None of the exceptions to the use of the “common sense” exemption as identified in Government Code § 15300.2 exist.
2. This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

**Supervisors:**

Gorin: Aye      Rabbitt: Aye      Coursey: Aye      Hopkins: Aye      Gore: Aye

Ayes: 5              Noes: 0              Absent: 0              Abstain: 0

**So Ordered.**