

VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE

Staff Report - Item 5

TO: Community Advisory Committee

FROM: Alisa Lembke, Board Clerk/Administrative Analyst

SUBJECT: Review draft 2024 Task Group Year-End Reports

DATE: December 19, 2024

Recommendation:

Provide comments on the draft Task Group 2024 year-end reports and approve final reports.

Attached for your review and comments are the following draft Task Group year-end reports:

1. Legislative/Regulatory
2. Programs & Outreach
3. Bioenergy

The schedule is to provide all final year-end reports to the Board for their information at their February meeting.

Attachments:

1. Legislative/Regulatory Task Group 2024 Draft Year-end Report
2. Programs & Outreach Task Group 2024 Draft Year-end Report
3. Bioenergy 2024 Task Group Draft Year-end Report

LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY TASK GROUP 2024 YEAR END REPORT

Members: Lorenzo Kristov
Jennifer Rindahl
Rahul Athalye
Ari Halberstadt (as of October 2024)

Primary Staff Contacts: Mitch Sears, Yvonne Hunter

2024 Charge

Work with VCE staff and VCE's lobbyist to:

- Provide feedback, technical information and strategic advice to VCE staff on key legislative and regulatory issues facing VCE and the CCA community in general in 2024, including legislation and regulatory issues related to VCE's Legislative Platform, Strategic Plan and Environmental Justice Statement.
- Provide periodic reports to the CAC about legislation and regulatory issues.
- Solicit recommendations from the CAC to inform VCE positions on key legislation and regulatory proceedings.
- Work with staff and VCE's regulatory consultant to enhance the Task Group's and CAC's understanding of regulatory proceedings and their relationship to legislative matters, including ways to enhance VCE's Legislative Platform to include regulatory issues and possibly VCE's regulatory engagement.
- Contribute to VCE's engagement with legislators and other stakeholders.
- Discuss strategies to engage regulatory agencies and stakeholders to achieve a more level playing field for procuring local resources, address Resource Adequacy challenges, and to advance dynamic pricing programs, such as AgFIT, and other grid services opportunities, for VCE and other CCAs.
- Receive periodic updates about and discuss CalCCA legislative and regulatory priorities, emphasizing how VCE can most effectively contribute.
- Work with staff to periodically review and update VCE's Legislative Platform for consideration by the CAC and VCE Board.

Highlights of Accomplishments in 2024

During 2024, the Leg/Reg Task Group met bi-weekly with staff and VCE's lobbyist and worked closely with them to:

1. Review pending legislation, provide feedback, technical and policy information, and strategic guidance on legislative and regulatory issues; discuss and recommend VCE positions and legislative strategies for pending legislation and regulatory issues. Special attention was devoted to discussing and advising on how best to engage legislators and regulators on issues of key importance to CalCCA and VCE.

2. Provide input on selected regulatory proceedings of interest to VCE. These included the CPUC's Dynamic Pricing, Slice of Day (Resource Adequacy) proceedings.
3. Provide periodic updates to the CAC on key legislative and regulatory issues.
4. Receive and discuss periodic updates about CalCCA legislative activities, including critical opportunities for VCE to engage and lobby its legislators.
5. Discuss how best to incorporate regulatory issues into the draft 2025 Legislative Platform. Prepare draft 2025 Legislative and Regulatory Platform (that incorporates regulatory issues more completely) for review by the CAC and VCE board of directors.
6. Receive periodic updates on the West Wide Pathways Initiative, which is working to create a Regional Organization among the western states.

Challenges

1. Identifying those legislative and regulatory topics where VCE has a significant interest and can make a difference given VCE's limited resources. This is particularly challenging with regard to CPUC proceedings because there are so many that affect retail electricity customers, they continue to proliferate, they are extremely chronophagic and there is no VCE staff person assigned to track regulatory activities.
2. Continuing to examine how best to work with CalCCA and other individual CCAs to expand dynamic pricing programs through the CPUC, CEC or other agencies.
3. How to be most effective in the legislative and regulatory arenas given VCE's limited resources.

Opportunities

1. Play a role in educating VCE staff, the CAC, VCE board and CalCCA about policy and regulatory developments and other ways to advance opportunities and benefits for deploying distributed energy resources (DER).
2. Play a role in educating VCE staff, the CAC and the VCE board about the ongoing efforts of the West Wide Pathways Initiative and how it might affect VCE and community choice more generally.
3. Continue to expand legislative opportunities in which VCE may become more engaged with CalCCA.

**PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH TASK GROUP (POTG)
2024 YEAR END REPORT**

Members: Keith Taylor (Chair)
David Springer (Co-Chair)
Mark Aulman
Diccon Westworth

Staff Lead: Rebecca Kuczynski

2024 Charge:

Collaborate with VCE staff and consultants on policies, procedures and programs aimed at improving the customer experience and customer satisfaction in VCE, including:

1. Assist in the development of public information strategies, planning, and materials related to VCE customer marketing, outreach, policies and programs. As requested by staff, review draft materials and provide comments as appropriate; assist with customer-facing community outreach to, and liaison with, member communities.
2. Help define audience segments within VCE's service area and consult on appropriate messages and communications approaches; provide a sounding board to assist in message development and copy testing. Conduct review of marketing materials at the draft (pre-release) stage upon request from staff.
3. Assist with identification of statewide program opportunities and development of strategies for disseminating information on eligibility, rebate amounts, stacked incentives, and other details; assist Staff with finding and applying for external funding for potential programs.
4. Collaborate with Staff on an annual update to the 3-year Programs Plan, discuss 2024 program implementation with Staff; assist with the update of 2022 program design/implementation forms and program prioritization for implementation in 2024.
5. As requested by the Director of Customer Care and Marketing, provide outreach and messaging support for the efforts of other CAC task groups, as well as outreach to VCE's participating jurisdictions to encourage collaborative dissemination regarding programs, energy savings tips, rebates/incentives etc. on their websites and social media platforms.
6. Provide summaries and updates at monthly CAC meetings on Task Group activities.

Highlights of Accomplishments

2024 is the first year of the merged Programs and Task Group and Outreach Task Group.

VCE launched:

- a. Electric Advisor Program
 - i. POTG provided feedback on several items: rep training, website look/feel, resources, importance of being up-to-date on code etc.
 - ii. Emphasis on equity - ensuring program was oriented toward customers having trouble paying their bills and also renters (not just owners)
- b. VGI (Vehicle Grid Integration)
 - i. POTG provided input on the importance of being able to charge bidirectionally. Staff took this into consideration when determining whether to participate in PG&E's VGI pilot or to craft its own.
- c. HFP (Hourly Flex Pricing)
 - i. POTG provided input on design and implementation of the Hourly Flex Pricing (aka Expanded AgFIT) pilots
- d. [REACT](#) (Rural Electrification And Charging Program)
 - i. POTG provided input on the charging program and introduced ideas about successfully marketing the program to customers.
- e. POTG provided input and guidance on:
 - i. Publicizing lower rates
 - ii. Countering misinformation
 - iii. EE + saving money - customers
- f. Attendance at CalCCA conference.
 - i. Significant showing by VCE staff, board, and community advisory committee members.
 - ii. Lessons learned
 1. The CCAs are growing into a powerful, sophisticated bloc of proto-utilities.
 2. There is an enormous amount of entrepreneurship within the CCA system.
 3. VCE staff and representatives would be well served to be keyed into the statewide network, especially as innovative programs come to fruition at other CCAs.
 - 4.
- g. Administrative and managerial
 - i. Messaging assistance from POTG.
 1. POTG members assisted with elements of messaging for POTG and VCE more generally. Specifically with regard to
 - a. Provide incentives (typically last awhile and then dry-up)
 - b. Promote Concierge Service (requires an understanding of motivators, cost-effectiveness for customers, and funding approaches)

- c. Promote things customers can do to save money and energy at the same time (awnings, window film, etc.). VCE policies on rates and power portfolio mix, to help with challenges around misinformation on VCE's role is setting power rates.

[Remains a work in progress.](#)

- ii. POTG documentation held in an organized Google Drive folder for future POTG leadership
 - 1. [POTG 2024 guidance memo](#)
 - 2. [POTG Master Folder](#)

Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Ongoing - Limited staff time to develop, market, and manage programs, especially as programs continue to grow in complexity and scope.
 - Partnerships have proven to be time-consuming but productive.
- Messaging what a CCA is, and its advantages. It remains a somewhat challenging model to convey to the public. How to do so in a way that is truthful, but also avoids the "TMI" (too-much-information) challenge?

Opportunities:

- Continue to learn from experiences of other CCAs on programs that have worked well for their customers.
 - Joint action with other CCAs to overcome VCE's attenuated staffing and volunteerism.
 - CCPower is a great example. Could other joint activities be pooled?
 - Alternatively, potential to collaborate with other public utilities.
 - Messaging.
 - Retention Analysis is an area that could help catalyze messaging.
 - Leveraging innovative programs to message.
 - AgFit
- Business and economic development opportunities in working with large load customers.
 - Engagement opportunity with the electric co-op sector.

**VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2024 BIOENERGY TASK GROUP YEAR-END STATUS REPORT

Members: Danielle Ballard
Diccon Westworth
Mark Aulman

Staff Lead: Gordon Samuel

Summary:

The charge of the Task Group is to collaborate with VCE staff on development of recommendations to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on bioenergy electricity generation which may be applicable to Valley Clean Energy.

Specific tasks enumerated in the 2024 charge and respective outcomes to date:

Task 1: *Identify bioenergy-based power generation technologies and resources which are currently available or may be available to Valley Clean Energy.* **Outcome to date:** VCE could benefit by adding baseload resources, such as bioenergy, to its portfolio in the 40-50MW range. Such an addition could enable VCE to portfolio diversification and enhance resilience. Staff has determined, however, that the Cal ISO queue for bioenergy is currently small, and power purchase arrangements can be time-consuming to develop. The Task Group agrees with staff that VCE could benefit from the creation of a small-scale request for information (RFI) solicitation to determine what information can be found relating to the potential availability of small, locally situated projects. This RFI solicitation is now being considered.

Task 2: *Engage with external information sources including subject matter experts, relevant stakeholders, other CCAs, and others.* **Outcome to date:** The categories of information summarized in the 2024 Task Group Charge, e.g. available fuel sources, VCE baseload benefits, air emission impacts, other benefits and potential liabilities are to be determined following the abovementioned RFI solicitation.

Task 3: *Provide summaries and updates at monthly CAC meetings on Bioenergy Task Group activities, including recommendations as appropriate.* **Outcome to date:** A summary of Task Group activity, including preliminary research, was presented to the CAC at the Committee's August and October meetings. After a period when no meetings could be held, the Task Group resumed meetings in December 2024. Task Group meetings and participation by CAC members will be paused pending staff assessment of the small-scale RFI solicitation to assess what information can be found relating to small, locally situated projects.

Resumption of Task Group activity will occur when requested by staff.