



POWER UP *with* VCE!

Valley Clean Energy Newsletter, Autumn 2020

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Useful Info

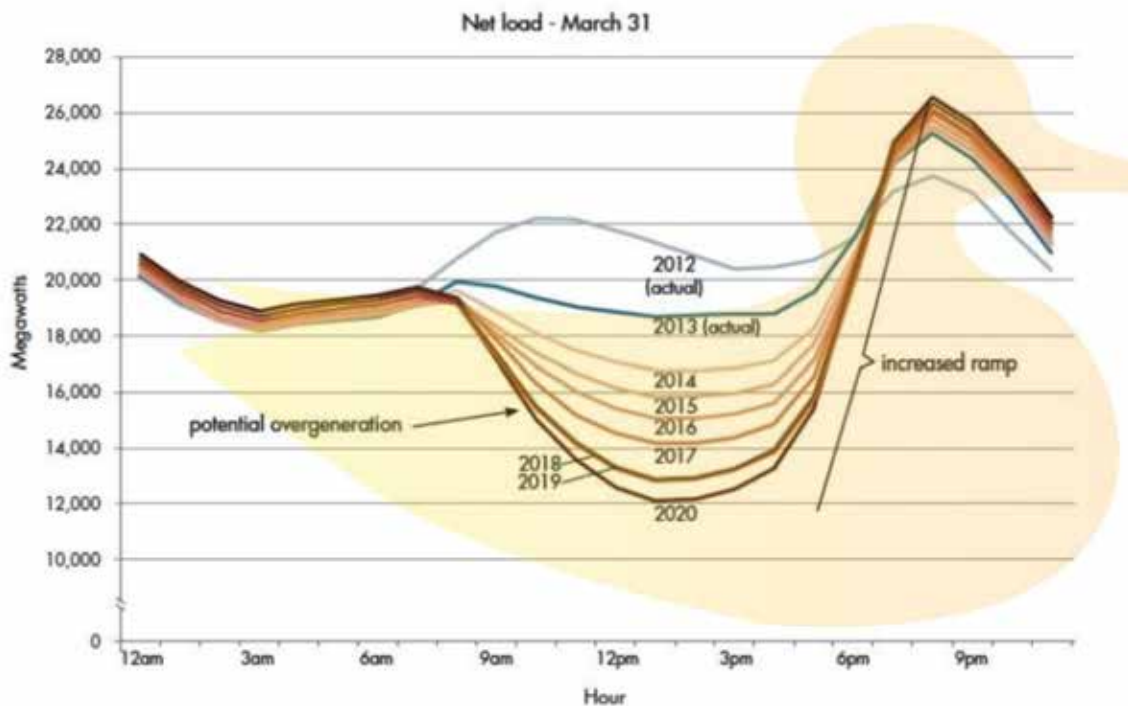
Flatten your Electricity Curve

The generating capacity of photovoltaic (PV) systems has increased dramatically over the past decade, as more solar has been installed, and as technology has improved. Solar (including solar thermal plants and rooftop PV) may be responsible for generating more than half of the capacity needed on peak summer days—a percentage that might have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

Meanwhile, conventional utility-scale generating capacity (including gas turbines, nuclear and to a lesser extent hydropower) has remained stable. These facilities are effective for meeting “base loads,” or the minimum electrical power needed on the grid at any given time but ramping these sources up or down to meet varying loads is both difficult and expensive.

When energy demand or the amount of energy supplied by the electrical grid at any given time is plotted on a graph, it is represented by the “duck curve” shown below.

Check out our [full article](#) about Flattening the Curve.





GREATER WINTERS FIRE RELIEF FUND

Winters, California

Supporting Wildfire Victims—Join Us!

As wildfires have raged throughout the western states, ranchers and business owners in the greater Winters area have been trying to put their lives back together after seeing their homes and businesses go up in flames.

VCE urges those who can to join us in offering support by donating to the Greater Winters Fire Relief Fund created by the Rotary Club of Winters. VCE contributed \$1,500 toward a program goal of \$60,000.

Two rounds of giving are planned, if funds allow. The first round will offer a flat amount based on size of household; Round 2 would offer needs-based help with longer-term items such as rental assistance and clean-up.

Check out the [Winters Rotary Club Facebook page](#) to learn more about how you can get involved.



Is the PCIA Exit Fee Fair for Customers?

You may be familiar with a charge on your electric bill called the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment, or PCIA. The PCIA is an exit fee meant to compensate PG&E for the loss of customers for whom it entered into long-term power contracts—customers who are now buying cleaner electricity from VCE or other CCA programs like it. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has stated that PG&E deserves to be “made whole” after customers leave PG&E to participate in cleaner energy programs like VCE and we agree with that, on principle. But we do not agree with the PCIA rising steadily, and with minimal transparency. It has risen more than 600% since 2013 in our service area and has nearly doubled since 2018. These are costs that our customers must bear; costs that prevent us from reducing your electricity rates as much as we’d like.

Let’s look at it this way – say you order dinner for a group of 10 friends, but 4 people don’t show, leaving the rest of the group to pay the bill. No one would blame you for wanting your no-show friends to pay their fair share. But let’s say this kept happening year after year, but you kept buying the same amount of food (electricity). You were able to collect from those that did not pay every time (PCIA), so there was no incentive for you to cut costs. To add to that, the \$10 charge in 2013 grew to \$60 in 2020—would that seem fair to the guests? Your dinner parties would probably be pretty lonely after that.

VCE is part of a coalition addressing this inequity—because it lacks transparency and ultimately leads to higher electric bills for our customers. California’s large investor-owned utilities have little incentive to reduce their portfolio costs, which passes costs on to customers whether they’re enrolled in a CCA or not. This coalition of CCA leaders and stakeholders across California crafted a formal [petition](#) to the CPUC asking to lower the PCIA, to increase transparency in its calculation, and to reduce price volatility. This letter was delivered in late September.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to learn more about our continued fight to protect our customers from escalating PCIA fees.

Alerts



Manage your High Summer Electricity Bills

While the calendar tells us that summer is nearly over, there's plenty of hot weather we're still dealing with. And hot days and nights always mean higher utility bills.

Valley Clean Energy has rolled out a new Energy Efficiency Program that details some really smart energy efficiency measures you can consider for your home. Some can be implemented at a very low cost, while others are more costly—initially. The dollars you spend once will keep paying you back in money, energy and carbon emissions saving for years to come.

Check out our [Program tips](#) today.

ultra green spotlight



Look Who's in the Spotlight!

We're thrilled to shine our sparkly green spotlight on another one of our esteemed UltraGreen customers.

Sharon Tobar is a Davis homeowner and President of the Davis Food Co-op Board. She takes her environmental values very seriously, both at work and at home. As a business leader, Tobar was instrumental in the Co-op's forward-thinking decision to upgrade to UltraGreen, VCE's 100% renewable and carbon-free electricity service. And at home, rooftop solar panels and UltraGreen, power her electric vehicle.

"I support the CCA movement in California for its role in increasing renewable energy. Did you know CCAs are responsible for 3,000 MW of new renewable energy in CA, including solar, wind and bioenergy? That's how far CCAs have taken us. I am thrilled to have Valley Clean Energy leading the way in Yolo County."

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Thanks for your environmental vision and leadership, Sharon. Together, we can move toward a cleaner energy economy!

VCE Quarterly Mascot



A Tree as our Clean Energy Mascot?!

That's right—we can't think of anything more deserving of that title than the "Lone Oak" gracing the Gibson House and Yolo County Historical Museum in Woodland.

This massive Valley Oak (*Quercus Lobata*) is one of the largest and oldest trees in Woodland and is just one of the hundreds of native oaks that gave Woodland its name. Although the original woodlands were removed long ago for farming, this magnificent specimen remains, and has been doing the important work of sequestering carbon for about 400 years.

Weighing in at over 165,000 pounds—roughly equal to about 1,000 people—this mighty oak has absorbed an estimated 64.4 metric tons of CO₂ so far. We're hoping it carries on that good work of cleaning up our environment for another hundred years.