Summary of Fall 2022 CPUC High-DER Informal Outreach Meetings

Overview

Between September and November 2022, Commission staff with support from their consultants (Gridworks and Verdant) facilitated 20 informal tribal and community outreach meetings to begin the community engagement efforts for Track 1 and Track 2 of R.21-06-017, CPUC's rulemaking to modernize the electric grid for a high distributed energy resources future (known as the High DER proceeding).

The informal outreach meetings were developed in response to public feedback requesting the CPUC engage with communities, particularly disadvantaged communities, following the CPUC's May 3, 2022 Track 2 kick-off workshop titled "Evaluating Alternative Distribution System Operator Models for California". The meetings were also shaped by stakeholder feedback and response to the CPUC's August, 12, 2022, Ruling and August 23 workshop titled "Electric Grid Education and Outreach Workshop," where initial outreach plans were presented to parties.

The outreach meetings gathered insight and input from tribes, local governments, and community-based organizations across a number of topics related to the High DER proceeding, including energy priorities as well as challenges and barriers to adopting clean energy and distributed energy resources. Meeting participants were invited to continue to engage with the High DER proceeding and its future workshops.

The following summary provides a high-level overview of the informal outreach meetings.

Objectives

The CPUC's objectives in hosting the informal outreach meetings were to:

1. Listen to tribes, local governments, and community-based organizations ("participants") to gain an understanding of and gather information about:

    A. The participants' **priorities** with respect to energy (electric and gas);

    B. The participants' **challenges and barriers** to adopting clean energy technologies and distributed energy resources (DERs);

    C. The participants' **long-term visions** and the role of electric utilities and DERs in achieving those visions;

    D. How the CPUC and California Energy Commission can achieve **meaningful tribal and community outreach** and establish partnerships; and

    E. How the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) can best include the participants in **electric distribution system planning**.

2. Communicate to meeting participants how insights from these outreach meetings will be used to:

    A. Inform development of a draft scope of work for a statewide **Community Engagement Needs Assessment** to launch in 2023; and

    B. Gain insights about potential visions, objectives, and characteristics of a future electric grid for California, which will inform a **Future Grid Study** to be developed in 2023.

Outreach Meeting Participants

The CPUC invited organizations and individuals to the informal outreach meetings by contacting the agency's existing outreach lists and encouraging contacts to share information about the sessions with other interested parties. Some parties to the High DER proceeding also encouraged their networks to participate in the meetings and helped to organize participants to attend the sessions. Finally, organizers contacted attendees of the August 23, 2022, Electric Grid Education and Outreach Workshop to gauge their interest in participating in outreach meetings.

Outreach was focused on reaching stakeholders not already active in the High DER proceeding and those who typically do not participate in CPUC proceedings in general due to the cost and time commitments required. In particular, organizers considered the following:

- Availability to participate and represent a tribe, local government, or community advocacy group;

- Status of the stakeholder's local area on the CalEnviroScreen map of disadvantaged communities;[1]
- Individual or organizational focus on energy, utilities, environmental justice, climate, sustainability, and/or social justice; and
- Location in investor-owned utility service territories.

Outreach meetings were not intended to comprise a statistical sampling of communities throughout California, but Commission staff tried to ensure as much stakeholder diversity as possible in the short time-period available. Based on participants' interest and availability, small outreach meetings were grouped and organized around stakeholder roles, largely:

- Community-based, non-governmental, or advocacy organizations, termed "advocacy organizations" throughout this summary; and
- Local government organizations, including urban and suburban governments, rural and county governments, cities, and other municipal governments.

Tribal sessions were organized around the interest and availability of tribal government representatives and were grouped by geographical region.

Meetings ranged in time, depending on the size of the participant list, from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Overall, the CPUC staff hosted 20 outreach meetings between September 19 and November 14, including more than 80 participants representing 45 jurisdictions/organizations and 10 tribes. The CPUC was also joined by California Energy Commission staff in all of the meetings.

Table 1: Meeting Date, Duration, Attendee Description, and IOU Service Territory

Date	*Duration*	*Meeting Participant*	*Jurisdictional IOU*
Sept. 19	30 minutes	Rancho Palo Verdes	SCE
Oct. 18	30 minutes	Center for Accessible Technology	Multiple

Oct. 18	75 minutes	Rural County Representatives of California; Kern County; San Diego County Water Authority; County of Ventura; County of Santa Barbara	Multiple; SCE; SDG&E; PG&E
Oct. 19	45 minutes	City of Palmdale	SCE
Oct. 19	75 minutes	OC Goes Solar; The Energy Coalition; Peninsula Clean Energy community advisory committee	SCE; multiple; PG&E
Oct. 24	45 minutes	City of Lemon Grove	SDG&E
Oct. 24	60 minutes	San Diego Community Power; San Diego Community Power Advisory Committee	SDG&E
Oct. 24	30 minutes	Climate Action Santa Monica	SCE
Oct. 26	45 minutes	City of Irvine; City of San Diego	SCE; SDG&E
Oct. 26	45 minutes	East Bay Clean Power Alliance; Local Clean Energy Alliance; Community Environmental Council; Grid Alternatives; The Climate Reality Project	PG&E; SCE
Oct. 26	75 minutes	Humboldt County; City of Fortuna; Redwood Coast Energy Authority; Redwood Coast Energy Authority community advisory committee; Environmental Protection Information Center	PG&E

Oct. 26	75 minutes	Climate Action Santa Monica; San Jose Community Energy Advocates; Clean Power Alliance; Clean Energy Alliance Community Advisory Committee; City of Del Mar	SCE; PG&E; SDG&E
Oct. 27	75 minutes	San Jose Clean Energy; Zero Impact Solutions; Cinnamon Energy; City of San Jose	PG&E
Oct. 27	60 minutes	Silicon Valley Clean Energy; City of Sunnyvale; City of Milpitas; City of Mountain View; City of Morgan Hill; The Climate Reality Project	PG&E
Oct. 31	60 minutes	Hoopa Valley Tribe; Blue Lake Rancheria	PG&E
Nov. 3	45 minutes	Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles	Multiple
Nov. 3	60 minutes	Bay Area Regional Energy Network; City and County of San Francisco; StopWaste	PG&E
Nov. 7	60 minutes	Yurok Tribe	PG&E
Nov. 7	3 hours	Chemehuevi Indian Tribe; Morongo Band of Mission Indians; Ramona Band of Cahuilla; Northern Chumash Tribal Council; San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	PG&E; SCE

Nov. 14	60 minutes	Elk Valley Rancheria	PacifiCorp

Outreach Meeting Format and Content

Outreach meetings began with a welcome from the facilitator and CPUC staff and roundtable participant introductions. Introductions were followed by a CPUC staff presentation on the High DER Proceeding and the purpose of the outreach meetings. Participants were then provided question-and-answer opportunities, before the facilitated conversations began. All meetings took place virtually over Zoom.

Discussion for each outreach meeting varied based on timing, target audience, and participant interest areas. Questions and input, grouped by topic and participant type, are summarized in Section 5 below.

Outreach meeting materials included:

- Tribal outreach meeting agenda
- Tribal outreach meeting slides
- Community outreach meeting agenda
- Community outreach meeting slides

Summary of Outreach Meeting Questions and Input

This section is organized according to the following stakeholder groups:

1. Tribal outreach sessions
2. Rural/county governments
3. Urban/suburban governments
4. Advocacy organizations
5. Meetings with mixed organizational representation, including advocacy organizations, local governments, community choice aggregators (CCA), and CCA advisory groups

In this section, the frequency of comments repeated by different participant organizations is noted by a parenthetical designation of (xNumber) following the statement. For example, (x2) demonstrates that two separate participants from different

organizations made the same comment. A compilation of frequently repeated statements can be found in the table below:

Table 2: Frequent Outreach Meeting Participant Feedback

Visibility & Partnership in Utility Planning	Participants, particularly in rural and tribal areas, expressed frustration with utility planning efforts, including a lack of shared data, poor communication and utility follow through, and utilities' failure to include communities in planning efforts. Participants would broadly like to see better communication, transparency, and partnership in planning efforts.
Reliability & Resiliency	Participants expressed concern with frequent and lengthy power outages, whether due to public safety power shutoffs or other weather events. Outages have costly repercussions to residents and governance systems in myriad ways, including interruptions to local emergency response operations and residential needs for heating, cooling, and cold storage. All communities expressed the need for reliable and resilient energy service, and some expressed concerns about efforts to electrify communities without reassurance that power would be available when needed.
Cost & Affordability	Participants expressed deep concern with the cost and affordability of energy in California, particularly for communities that are disadvantaged, low-income, or on fixed incomes. Affordability concerns also impact community rollout of electrification, including costs of technologies and distributed energy resources. In some communities, the high cost of electricity encourages residents to adopt resources like rooftop solar to mitigate power bill expenses.
Interconnection & Grid Capacity	Participants expressed frustration with a lack of grid capacity to interconnect new loads, which hampers economic development efforts as well as can transportation and building electrification efforts. For some communities, connecting new building projects can take two years or more.
Energy Independence Through Microgrids	Participants expressed interest in achieving energy independence to promote community resiliency and reliability through the use of microgrids powered by clean energy technologies. Participants were interested in the added benefit of selling power back to the grid.

Interest in DERs	Participants broadly expressed an interest in clean energy technologies and DERs, including solar, storage, vehicle electrification, and more.
Tribal Sovereignty	Representatives of tribes expressed a lack of support from the state and utilities in meeting energy goals. Participants expressed the need for recognition of tribal sovereignty, barriers to accessing programs, the need for technical assistance, more integrated planning efforts, and better dialogue to promote creative thinking.
Barriers to Electrification	In addition to cost, affordability, and energy reliability, participants noted that other barriers to electrification include low-quality housing stock for low-income residents and renters, and multifamily homes, difficulty and cost of retrofits and equipment upgrades, community needs for technical assistance, funding barriers, land-use issues, lack of incentives or awareness of incentives, and more.
New Actors in Utility Operations	Participants expressed interest in how utility operations can include new actors to perform functions like delivering subsides and rebates, providing programs, delivering on equity, resiliency, and affordability outcomes, and planning and implementing clean energy projects.
Better Community Engagement	All participants expressed the need for better community engagement from both the state and utilities. Participants commonly recommended that engagement should: · prioritize relational rather than transactional engagement · respond to public feedback · prioritize language accessibility and disability accessibility · proactively meet communities where they are · utilize trusted partners such as local nonprofits and community organizations · prioritize regular interactions · vary meeting times and locations to respond to community needs · provide incentives for busy residents to engage, including food, child-care, and payments · promote energy literacy and understanding

A. Tribal outreach sessions

1. *What are your tribe's energy needs and priorities with respect to electricity and natural gas?*

- Frequent and lengthy outages have costly repercussions to community services, governance systems, and local businesses as well as to residents who need cold storage to refrigerate medications, who need to cool or heat homes, and who rely on the internet for communication and education. (x6)
  - » Community members using medical equipment have to go find generators. (x3)
- Regular public safety power shut-off (PSPS) and other outage events are problematic for residents and for tribal emergency response operations (x5)
- Tribes need reliable energy service. (x5)
- Tribes need resilient energy service. (x4)
- Communities living at the end of power lines and/or in remote and rugged areas experience burdensome service delays and outages. (x4)
- Power is not reliable. (x4)
  - » Outages can often be transmission related.
- Affordability and the cost of energy in California is a concern. (x2)
- Communities are burdened by high energy costs, especially considering low wages and income. (x2)
- A significant number of residents live without power. (x2)
- Energy infrastructure suffers from a lack of investment, hampering tribal energy goals. (x2)
- The comfort of air conditioning and heating is important to communities. (x2)
- Communities have experienced week-long power outages. (x2)
- Some tribes are not served by utilities at all and are 100% off grid, with no utility infrastructure that reaches the reservation. This creates severe economic development challenges.
- Residents use wood heating and have associated indoor air quality issues.
- Running fossil fuel generators is costly and burdensome in remote areas.

· Wildfires threaten tribal utility infrastructure in addition to burdening residents with PSPS events.

· Tribes are burdened with lengthy connection and power hook-up times.

2. How can the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) best include tribes in electric distribution system planning?

· Utilities do not include tribes in the planning process, making it difficult to plan for future projects. (x3)

· Utilities are not communicating well about disruptions to current operations, sometimes providing little to no information; (x3)

  » This is exacerbated by telecommunications services going down when power is out.

· Proactively share data and plans. (x2)

· Respect tribal decisions to own their own infrastructure.

· PG&E can be a hindrance to project rollouts, taking a long time to complete projects and connect electricity to new development, and needs to improve tribal consultation services.

· Contract with tribes to do local work, such as vegetation management and tree removals.

· PG&E removes power poles prematurely and without discussing it with the tribe or landowners first.

· Work with tribes who are developing strategic energy plans to develop better relationships.

· Streamline approaches to development and disaster planning with tribes.

· Hire staff to proactively engage tribes in planning processes and with recognition of tribal processes.

· Provide more technical assistance and information about opportunities.

· Tribes should be engaged and afforded opportunities to comment when developing projects on tribal ancestral lands that are not part of reservations.

· Hire more people who understand tribal issues.

3. What challenges and barriers does your tribe face in adopting clean energy solutions and distributed energy resources?

· Tribes face energy challenges that are both technical and non-technical. (x2)

· Timing constraints and funding challenge coordination of distributed energy resource rollout with the implementation of other service changes such as broad band opportunities; communities do not want to dig up roads twice and do want to maximize funding. (x2)

· Assistance programs and other grant programs are not tailored to tribal needs and goals. (x2)

· Remote locations, difficult terrain create operations and cost challenges. (x2)

  » Tsunami zones are shifting and create challenges.

· Infrastructure is at capacity, delaying tribal clean energy projects. (x2)

· Tribes may not have the staff or resources for master land-use planning or utility planning. (x2)

· Some tribes cannot access assistance programs and other grant funding at all due to requirements on the funding that require current energy service providers to be California providers, restrictions on matching funds qualifications, and unclear requirements that tribes waive sovereignty.

· Some tribes are challenged by net-metering policies in other states which prohibit them from selling power back to the grid, which may inhibit the tribe's ability to adopt distributed energy resources.

· Piecemeal funding for projects challenges rollout. For example, a project may be funded for the first five miles but not an entire route.

· Tribes need technical/legal assistance to navigate programs and regulation.

· Technical assistance to understand possibilities and alternatives for technologies (especially emerging technologies) and systems is costly.

· Housing challenges make it difficult to hire and retain staff who could provide energy services and technical assistance.

· Upgrading homes to accommodate residential solar is challenging.

· Some tribes have little internal capacity to undertake projects.

· Tribes are experiencing delays with interconnection processes.

· Wind and solar resources require large footprints.

· Off-grid tribes face easement and right-of-way issues connecting to the grid.

· Tribes need better access to broadband and telecommunications services to support energy goals.

· Ratemaking challenges in creating tribal-owned utilities.

4. What is your tribe's long-term vision for a clean energy future?

· Energy independence through tribal-owned and -operated microgrids powered by distributed energy resources such as solar, battery storage, wind, and micro-hydropower. (x7)

  » Microgrids could keep emergency services, tribal communications, community necessities like groceries, and home systems running during regional outages.

  » Microgrids could possibly be connected through a regional tribal energy system.

  » Some communities want to be self-sustaining for at least 5 days.

· Selling power back to the grid to generate revenue for tribal community. (x3)

· Microgrid islanding capabilities to promote resiliency in times of larger regional outages.

· Microgrids and DERs providing safe spaces and necessities for people when emergencies happen and to coordinate with local governments and emergency responders.

· Microgrids and storage to help with resiliency and reliability needs due to being in a remote area.

· Interested in large scale solar.

· Interested in smaller solar and wind projects due to land-use issues.

· Serving ancestral territories and reservation communities with power.

· A decentralized power grid.

· Full electrification.

· Reduced reliance on fossil-fuels.

· Improved reliability for elderly, infants, and households.

· Increased automation to reduce costs.

- Improved energy efficiency to improve energy affordability.
- Off-grid tribes want grid access.

5. How can the CPUC and California Energy Commission achieve meaningful tribal community outreach and establish partnerships?

- Change regulations to reflect tribal sovereignty and barriers to accessing programs, adjust improper power dynamics between utilities and tribes, and support tribes in achieving goals. (x6)
- Provide technical assistance for project development and planning as well as assistance accessing funding opportunities. (x4)
- Engage tribes in regular dialogue that promotes creative thinking about institutional and economic challenges facing tribal energy goals. (x4)
    - » How can tribes expand their systems without repetitive costs and time delays?
    - » Include interpreters in the conversations to help everyone understand each other.
- Engage tribes in proactive, regular, and iterative planning efforts. (x3)
- Provide more, non-competitive funding to tribes. (x3)
- Engage tribes in wholistic planning that doesn't silo water issues from power issues and power issues from broadband issues. (x2)
- Understanding and respecting sovereignty is key to successful engagement with tribes. (x2)
- Provide better information about how proceedings will affect tribes. (x2)
- Remove state taxes from tribal energy bills. (x2)
- Conduct a rate component analysis to determine what programs are not applicable to reservations. (x2)
- Encourage utilities to plan better with tribes.
- Continue to engage with tribes regionally and individually. Engagement should reflect tribal processes.
- Planning efforts should include long-term plans and transitional plans and provide education to tribal staff.

- Agencies and CAISO could include tribal nations in scenario planning for capacity improvements.
- Coordinate tribal engagement by inviting other agencies to listen into meetings and by proactively sharing insights among agencies.
- Make changes to processes that are incompatible with tribal needs.
- Visit tribal lands to understand tribal needs firsthand, instead of making plans for tribes from remote cities with little direct knowledge of tribal needs.
- Ensure agency staff are seriously reviewing tribal concerns with planned energy projects, particularly offshore wind projects that could have consequences on wildlife, including migrating whales.
- Assist the development of tribal energy aggregators, similar to CCA model.
- Adjust infeasible utility planning processes to work for tribes.
- Improve mapping in planning and DER analysis by including tribal lands and engaging tribes meaningfully in that mapping process.
- Mandate a process for connecting off-grid reservations to the grid.
- Support development of tribal rates that do not include state or local taxes
- Assist with direct outreach to tribes about project development that is not spearheaded by utilities.
- Hire more people who understand tribal issues.
- Prioritize tribes in state equity goals.
- Proactively plan for the development of tribal utilities with tribes.

B. Rural/County Governments

1. What are your communities' energy needs and priorities with respect to electricity and natural gas?

- Communities have reliability concerns when it comes to mass electrification. (x5)
  - » How can communities deploy electric vehicle fleets when communities don't know if they'll have electricity to power the vehicles?
- Many rural communities do not have reliable electricity, facing regular and frequent outages. (x3)

» Outages can last 20 hours or longer.

· Wildfire continues to threaten communities that have already been burned over multiple times. (x3)

· People are turning to fossil fuel generators in times of outages while we're supposed to be in a clean energy transition. (x2)

· Affordability is concern, especially for renters and low-income residents. (x2)

· Communities who are located at the ends of utility service territories/lines feel the pain points of load pockets in terms of reliability and growing service needs.

· Agricultural communities also have concerns with reliability and electrification.

· People depend on electricity for medical needs.

· Public safety power shut-offs challenge ability to provide other essential services, including telecommunications and water.

· Unplanned fast trip outages are rapidly increasing in number.

· Residents face air quality and health concerns.

2. What challenges and barriers does your community face to adopting clean energy solutions and distributed energy resources?

· Difficult to achieve decarbonization goals when electric service is unreliable. (x2)

· It can take 2 years or more to get power turned on for new building projects which threatens economic/financial viability of development projects. (x2)

· Electrification for residents, including low-income and renters, face barriers of low-quality housing stock. How can mitigating these barriers to electrifying built environments be funded? (x2)

· Technology adoption is a barrier.

· Utilities are revoking "will serve" letters due to lack of capacity to meet existing needs, let alone state goals to rely more on the electric grid.

· State policy, ISO policy, and utility planning is not aligned with rural community needs for development and reliable service.

· State mandates pressure communities to change without giving them the tools to do it.

· Paying for panel upgrades and infrastructure upgrades is a barrier.

· State funding and grants to pay for DERs or upgrades are very siloed.

· Local land-use issues can clash with clean energy development goals.

· Utilities don't share data and planning information.

· Equity issues of gas decommissioning and electrification—who will be stuck paying for the gas system?

· Local governments don't have the capacity to work directly in CPUC proceedings on these issues.

· How will we handle DER waste and recycling issues?

3. What is your community's long-term vision for a clean energy future?

· New actors in utility operations to deliver subsidies and rebates. Utilities don't have the best public relations, and communities are sometimes not comfortable enrolling in their programs. What other actors can provide services? CCAs and third-party implementors? (x2)

  » IOUs not poised to deliver equity, resiliency, and affordability outcomes due to investor interest in making sure every dollar invested provides a rate of return.

· New actors to plan and implement projects. Other local agencies such as water providers can and are implementing pumped storage hydro and are building reservoirs, tunnels, powerhouses, and more. (x2)

· Incorporate equity at the start of the energy transition. (x2)

· Energy independence to promote resiliency, especially for other essential services like water service, in times of broader utility outages. Looking to generators and solar/battery combos.

· Microgrids.

· Resiliency centers.

· DERs and electrification to meet emissions goals.

· Clean energy world that includes direct air capture and green hydrogen projects. Interested in using solar for direct air capture, not just to supplement grid needs.

· Small biomass facilities combine benefits of energy and clearing overgrown forests instead of vegetation management work that equates to open burning (air quality issues).

· Wholistic planning approach to microgrids and remote grids to provide resiliency benefits for wildfire and other extreme weather events.

- Wholistic approach to storage, electrification, energy efficiency.
- New ways of funding infrastructure that aren't ratepayer based.

4. How can the CPUC and California Energy Commission achieve meaningful community and stakeholder outreach and establish partnerships?

- Prioritize relational engagement vs transactional engagement. Meet with communities every quarter all around the state instead of soloing engagement within specific proceedings and topics. Be more responsive to public feedback that comes in outside of proceedings. (x5)
- Local governments don't have time/capacity to engage in CPUC proceedings. (x2)
- Come to community planning meetings/other local government venues. (x2)
- CPUC isn't positioned for community engagement—issues are too far removed from local issues and the learning curve for community members is too steep.
- Use trusted community messengers who may not always be specialized in sustainability issues.
- Host en bancs in other areas across the state. Commissioners could meet with community advocates.
- Emphasize the issues you want local governments to engage on so they can focus attention.
- Re-examine fiscal relationships/fiscal equity between utilities and communities
- Agencies could look at studies from:
  - » the Greenlining Institute and California Environmental Justice Alliance;
  - » local government planning studies and economic outlooks, especially post-Covid 19;
  - » Kern County economic impact studies on California cities/counties phasing out gas cars;
  - » utility outage reports.
- CPUC public comments tab on website was a good update.
- State should not set one-size fits all mandates.
- Use clear, plain language—agencies use inaccessible language, even in the names of their proceedings

- Offer childcare, food, and compensation for people's time
- How can CPUC toe the line between direct democracy ideals and getting people up to speed to comment meaningfully on a proceeding—what about working groups?

5. How can the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) best include communities in electric distribution system planning?

- Utilities silo their approach to planning and are not thinking wholistically
- Utilities are not prioritizing capacity needs in rural communities.
- Utilities should include local government in planning before starting community outreach.
- Utilities should be more proactive about infrastructure maintenance and replacement; failures in planning currently result in telling communities no to service requests for new development or that there's a 3-year wait.
- Communities are running out of transmission, which impacts economic development goals and electrification goals.
- Utilities should pay communities for use of land where plant is located so that communities share in benefits.
- Utilities should share data and planning information

C. Urban/Suburban Governments

1. What are your communities' energy needs and priorities with respect to electricity and natural gas?

- Affordability is a concern (x5)
  - » Especially for low-income communities.
  - » Especially in areas with both warm summers and cold winters and other dramatic temperature changes.
  - » Especially for seniors on fixed incomes.
  - » Rates keep going up.
- High wildfire risk in areas with large open spaces and distribution lines. (x3)

· Comfort is a quality-of-life issue; communities depend on heating/cooling. (x2)

· Trying to underground lines. (x2)

· Growing communities need more power resources. (x2)

· Outages are challenging for residents, especially seniors using medical devices.

· Some cities looking to reduce gas load by 90 percent.

· Interest in electric mobility due to economic drivers such as gas prices.

2. What challenges and barriers does your community face to adopting clean energy solutions and distributed energy resources?

· Cost of electrification and DERs challenges local governments and residents. (x2)

» "Who pays" is a major barrier in energy conversations locally

· Some local governments are just starting outreach to understand their communities' needs for a clean energy future.

· Many people can't afford to get solar panels.

· Dust is reportedly lowering solar panel efficiency.

· Projects to install DERs, even with utility and state program support, are slow and difficult to get going.

· How can local governments support the numbers of electric vehicles they must purchase under electric vehicle laws across program areas? Do governments incrementally increase infrastructure or do they over-plan and potentially operate at budget losses now for future goals?

· Some do not want to electrify if gas is more affordable.

· Public safety power shut-offs challenge communities trying to electrify transportation.

· Housing mandates stress existing energy infrastructure.

· Many people can't afford electric vehicles, and residents resent gas-powered vehicle bans.

· Communities are financially struggling with day-to-day life.

· Shifting residential patterns from homeownership to rentals and corporate owners who aren't engaged in home solar. Solar applications are dropping.

· Tax credits for residential DERs can be too complicated for people to navigate—what is a better strategy for working class communities?

· Working and low-income communities have many older homes—what are the strategies for retrofitting them?

3. What is your community's long-term vision for a clean energy future?

· Electric mobility options due to resident commute times and other economic drivers.

· Renewables.

· Developing a CCA.

· Distributed energy resources.

· Energy independence to ensure community has energy during major disasters.

· Residential solar/storage combinations.

· Microgrids.

· Undergrounding power lines.

· Sidewalks, walking areas, walkability, trees, and grass spaces—connectivity for our community.

· Plans and strategies are dependent on money—sales and property taxes. Without grants, it would be hard to implement strategies.

· Energy resiliency (sometimes more than electrification).

· Ensuring that gas system customers are not left with ballooning costs.

4. How can the CPUC and California Energy Commission achieve meaningful community and stakeholder outreach and establish partnerships?

· CPUC should prioritize language accessibility. (x2)

· Consider spreading messages through media like radio, (ex. Spanish language radio) and allow listeners to call in to ask questions.

· Consider community-based social marketing and behavior change, not just "getting the word out."

· Use local talent to help engage on larger state-level issues.

- Partner with trusted community organizations, including faith-based organizations instead of using generic community meetings.
- Working class residents are focused on getting food on the table and keeping roofs over their heads, so you need to meet them where they are.
- Legal jargon is overly complicated—make it more understandable for the average person who doesn't have a master's degree.

5. How can the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) best include communities in electric distribution system planning?

- Prioritize language accessibility. (x3)
- Go to communities and residents, don't expect communities and residents to come to you. (x3)
- Partner with local nonprofits and trusted community organizations who aren't focused on energy. (x2)
  - » Faith-based organizations.
  - » Local governments and advocates.
  - » Chambers of commerce.
- Prioritize myth-busing about electrification—residents are very concerned about reliability and resiliency. (x2)
- Have regular meetings with local governments.
- Provide food at community meetings.
- Hold community forums on specific topics.
- Vary meeting times to be easier for attendees, including weekends and evenings.
- Ensure direct engagement with communities, not just advocate groups that flood meetings and drown out local voices.
- Be transparent and communicative.

D. Advocacy organizations

1. What are your communities' energy needs and priorities with respect to electricity and natural gas?

- Affordability is a concern. (x4)
  - » People can't afford to run their A/C and washer/dryer at the same time.
- Communities have resiliency and reliability issues with their electric service. (x3)
- Lower income communities are interested in being part of the clean energy transition. (x2)
- Resiliency and reliability are life or death issues for people with disabilities; every community includes individuals with disabilities. Medical baseline program is an inadequate proxy for tracking outage issues for people with disabilities.
- Indoor and outdoor air quality are concerns.
- Effective, accessible, and improved communications during planned and unplanned outage events, which have rapidly increased in number and frequency.
- Improved outage mitigation options for medical baseline customers and other at-risk residents with disabilities; consideration of poverty challenges amplifying evacuation challenges for people with disabilities.
- Harmful energy infrastructure has been placed in environmental justice communities.
- Communities need safe, efficient, affordable energy.

2. What challenges and barriers does your community face to adopting clean energy solutions and distributed energy resources?

- Communities face landlord-tenant issues with solar and other DER rollout. (x3)
- Communities face financial barriers (x2)
  - » Developers also not interested in some community projects for financial reasons.
- Pathways to achieving DERs from regulatory, technical standpoints are unclear.
- Communities spend a lot of time trying to understand what's possible and how to achieve it.
- Program opportunities do not always reflect community needs. For example, not all communities have program required space availability for solar projects, especially near DAC neighborhoods.

· Effective and accessible communication challenges for people living with disabilities. Outreach materials and efforts must be provided in accessible formats, such as:

  » written materials in large print with sans serif fonts, braille,

  » audio elements should be accessible,

  » videos should be captions,

  » presentations should have sign language, and

  » virtual materials should meet electronic web standard WCAG2.1AA.

· Outreach solely via virtual methods is not adequate for people who do not have internet access; access to communications technology can be challenging.

· Accessible design of electric transportation challenges adoption of those technologies by people living with disabilities.

· Retrofits are challenging.

· Every community has different access issues.

· The digital divide is a huge barrier.

3. What is your community's long-term vision for a clean energy future?

· Affordability; communities are interested in anything that will reduce bills, such as energy efficiency and weatherization.

· Resiliency options for customers with medical needs and disabilities, such as battery back-up power.

· Targeted investments in renewable energy to phase out fossil fuels and improve air quality.

· Energy resiliency to avoid blackouts.

· Infrastructure investment that doesn't cause community displacement.

· Community-owned and -controlled distributed energy systems.

· Clean, affordable energy using solar, battery storage, and wind.

· Microgrids.

· Community solar for multi-family housing.

· Energy democracy; providing communities early and meaningful input; allowing communities to codesign policies and programs.

· Resiliency hubs that provide spaces for people to go during disasters.

· Equitable energy transition and decision-making.

· CCA framework is better than IOU framework.

· Cap and trade is not a good program for communities, consider policies promoting renewables and electrification to serve folks with lower incomes and to provide resiliency.

· Redesigning a distribution system within the context of an IOU monopoly defeats the purpose of redesign.

· Workforce training and local economic development and support.

4. How can the CPUC and California Energy Commission achieve meaningful community and stakeholder outreach and establish partnerships?

· Do proactive outreach instead of passively offering workshops. Workshops are a model of democracy that doesn't work for working people who have second shifts and kids to take care of. The only way to engage with communities is to put money down and bring people to the table. (x2)

· Do more direct service work with independent living centers and senior organizations; work with agencies that work with aging populations.

· Reach out to student groups and climate organizations to engage youth, who are very concerned about climate change. Start as young as possible. Consider engagement opportunities at later times to give kids and opportunity to engage after school and around commitments. Share information and learning opportunities to help kids engage.

· Work with communities directly to help them understand opportunities for DERs.

· Recognize ways in which geographic and demographic communities have overlapping interests, for example environmental justice communities and the broader community of people living with disabilities would benefit from improving air quality.

· In agency proceedings involving equity considerations, flag clear opportunities of where issues of consideration are community issues instead of technical issues to support communities in navigating regulatory processes; provide clear pathways for folks who aren't technical to know when their input is being solicited.

· Do more outreach meetings and listening sessions.

· Agency proceedings are difficult to track if you're not a lawyer.

· Models like CARB's EJAC group and CPUC's DACAG group are good—how can more environmental justice issues be part of the conversation?

· Pay environmental justice organizations for their work—engaging with agencies is technical, laborious, and resource intensive.

· Outreach should be multicultural and framed around language justice.

· Agencies should coordinate to pass information back and forth.

· Communities want transparency and a say in how rates are determined.

5. How can the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) best include communities in electric distribution system planning?

· Overly technical discussions do not engage communities. (x4)

  » Listen to communities about what they want and how they want to use distributed energy resources in day-to-day terms

· Meet communities where they are and have a participatory experience. (x2)

· Engage communities early and meaningfully. (x2)

  » Talk to communities about where they would like a charger; seek to engage in outreach prior to infrastructure being built.

· Utilities have made some improvements, but they have a lot more work to do.

· Work with communities directly to help them understand opportunities for DERs.

· Invest in cultural competency.

· Conduct outreach and engagement in more inviting community spaces.

· Language access is important—don't just hyperfocus on English.

· Add resources—community engagement takes time and resources.

· Be accountable to communities.

· The grid is not capable of an equitable future; we need a social dimension to distribution planning processes that can't be based on historical levels of engagement.

· Have dedicated teams with accountable goals.

· Look at data and identify communities with historic divestment.

- Improve distribution upgrades in disadvantaged communities.
- Include CCAs in planning.
- Focus on BIPOC and immigrant communities and people with disabilities.
- More and better outreach to cities.
- Think outside the box and involve PTAs as well as climate groups.
- Bring people together to talk together.
- Trust-building takes time.

E. Meetings with Mixed Organizational Representation

These meetings included advocacy organizations, local governments, community choice aggregators (CCA), and CCA advisory groups.

1. *What are your communities' energy needs and priorities with respect to electricity and natural gas?*

- PG&E equipment failures are causing regular power outages for hundreds to hundreds of thousands of people. (x5)
- We need a resilient energy system. (x5)
  - » Rural areas are prone to extended outages, public safety power shutoffs.
- Southern Humboldt County has no power—the grid can't accommodate our needs. (x5)
- Cost and affordability are concerns. (x4)
  - » Especially for SDG&E customers.
- PG&E can't accommodate existing grid needs, including battery systems and EV charging—a lack of planning has caused this. (x4)
  - » Time from ask to time of potential hook up in 2024—2 years.
- More energy efficiency and weatherization measures. (x3)
- Communities care about climate change. (x3)
- Communities need capacity upgrades—PG&E customers waiting updates of a year for needed electric upgrades. (x2)

· Communities are interested in solar, energy efficiency, and other programs to reduce costs. (x2)

· Climate directives and unfunded mandates require a lot of investments from local governments, which is harder on DACs.

· DAC communities are more concerned with getting food on the table.

· Communities in inland and coastal areas face extreme heat and can't afford to run their air conditioning units.

· Communities need better ventilation, and energy efficiency; better ways to regulate home temperatures without A/C.

· When power is cut from cell towers, communication in evacuation is difficult.

· People rely on power for medications and medical machines.

· Low-income communities and disadvantaged communities are hardest hit by outages.

· People are dying due to outages—one elderly person had no power for 72 hours; at one point 3 hospitals were without power.

· EVs are taking off in wealthier areas.

2. What challenges and barriers does your community face to adopting clean energy solutions and distributed energy resources?

· Residential and commercial challenges include retro fits, line upgrades, and panel upgrades needed to install DERs. (x7)

· Finding trusted installers is challenging. (x5)

  » People don't want multiple contractors in their homes.

· Commercial and residential customers face failing infrastructure. (x3)

· Renters and multifamily units have particular challenges with DER rollout, including space and lack of capital to invest. (x3)

· Communities need more and better information about how DER installs work and about the different products and technologies available. (x2)

· How can we electrify when the grid isn't reliable or resilient? (x2)

· Costs of distributed energy resources and their impacts to ratepayers are a challenge. (x2)

· PG&E system has challenges hooking up existing needs for DERs; If we can't address PG&E capacity issues, we can't implement DERS. (x2)

· Utility self-interest gets in the way of DER rollout—their business models do not motivate them to promote DERs. (x2)

· Transmission and distribution infrastructure investments needed for DERs have the added cost of IOU returns.

· Interested in microgrids, energy efficiency, EVs, electrification, heat pumps, and fuel switching, but there are no local vendors and contracts to do it.

· Remote locations add to costs for contractors and installers.

· Few available developers.

· Heatwaves are already stressing the grid; how will climate change continue to impact infrastructure?

· Space and real-estate constraints challenge solar rollout.

· Unintended consequences of islanding—renewable generators get dropped for the safety of the grid.

· Language barriers also challenging installation.

· Long interconnection times and permitting are a challenge—how can we simplify interconnection?

· Who will pay the costs of the gas system as people electrify?

· What other systems do we need in place to electrify, especially considering resiliency issues?

· Legal and policy barriers to microgrids and separating from the grid.

· Informational barriers.

· Funding barriers.

3. What is your community's long-term vision for a clean energy future?

· Communities are very interested in any technology that will save money, particularly interested in solar. (x2)

· Large scale solutions like wind power, including offshore wind. (x2)

· Affordable power. (x2)

· Microgrids. (x2)

- Decentralized power grid.
- Solar and storage.
- Communities are interested in storage systems, including advanced batteries, as a response to public safety power-shutoffs, especially in unincorporated areas.
- Better segmenting of the grid to promote resiliency and reliability in times of larger outages.
- More green public transportation options.
- More non-wires alternatives.
- Back-up power for large commercial facilities.
- Stable, affordable rates provided by clean energy.
- Better air quality.
- Increased EV adoption to meet local climate goals.
- Prioritizing local jobs in the clean energy transition.
- Making improvements for multifamily housing units.
- Developing and electrifying neighborhoods and districts at scale.
- Resiliency centers.
- Ceiling fans and space heaters for temperature control.
- Increased health benefits from clean energy (lower asthma rates, etc.)

4. How can the CPUC and California Energy Commission achieve meaningful community and stakeholder outreach and establish partnerships?

- Engage CBOs but recognize they are resource strapped and provide funding.(x3)
- Meet communities where they are; don't expect communities to come to you. (x3)
- Prioritize language accessibility. (x2)
- Coordinate conversations with CBOs so they aren't constantly engaged in similar but siloed conversations.
- Public workshops will attract the same voices over and over again.
- Bring in expert DER consultants to your proceedings.
- Make sure utilities are not profiting by discouraging DERs.

· Enforce rules—regulatory agencies are in the business of foxes guarding hen houses, which erodes public trust and discourages engagement with agencies.

· Communities know their needs, but not in CPUC terms; hire consultants to engage people from representative groups on energy issues.

· Hire consultants who can engage on rapid deployment of DERs.

· Show communities how DERs can put checks in their hands, provide other hands-on activities.

· Improve CPUC website or have a community-focused version that is easier to use and read.

· Work to increase public energy literacy.

· Consider other media and engagement options like radio.

5. How can the utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) best include communities in electric distribution system planning?

· Utilities should provide better planning information and DER data, including GIS maps. (x5)

  » Where is there capacity? What projects can capture value while avoiding system upgrades?

· PG&E needs to provide better communication and follow through with commitments to local governments and residents. (x5)

· Local governments are looking for long-term planning with utilities—PG&E is not providing long-term planning engagement. (x3)

· Partner with trusted community partners and contract with organizations with field experience in the communities. (x3)

  » Fire departments.

  » School districts.

· Engage CBOs. Recognize they are resource strapped and provide funding. (x2)

· Prioritize language accessibility. (x2)

· Meet communities where they are; don't expect communities to come to you. (x3)

· Simplify interconnection processes. (x2)

· Utilities need to closely coordinate with local governments.

- Engagement is improving, but still isn't good.
- Proactively upgrade and replace failing equipment.
- Planning should take solar tax into account.
- Hard to find a live person at a utility—develop better customer friendliness and accessibility to the public.
- Make efforts to increase energy literacy.

Select Attachments Provided by Participants

Some participants provided additional materials to the CPUC during or following outreach meetings. A selection of those resources that are publicly available include:

- Brockway, Conde, and Callaway. *Inequitable Access to Distributed Energy Resources due to Grid Infrastructure Limits in California*. UC Berkeley. September 13, 2021. Available at: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6pc2k2tv
- Moezzi, M. 2016, *Contractor Interview Findings: Perceptions of Latino Households' Views on Home Energy Upgrades*. Center for Sustainable Energy. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GuARquk2qOeu2sJyPV-SUMcK0zKbC6OY/view
- Fournier, Eric Daniel, et al. "Net GHG emissions and air quality outcomes from different residential building electrification pathways within a California disadvantaged community." *Sustainable Cities and Society* 86 (2022): 104128. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210670722004413?via=ihub
- Costa, Mark, et. al. "Using Big Data to Assess Energy System Transitions in Under-resourced Communities." Available at: https://aceee2022.conferencespot.org/event-data/pdf/catalyst_activity_32369/catalyst_activity_paper_20220810190450177_fc58836e_521e_4f1c_8024_67804a772721
- Mehdi, et al. "an ecosystem view of peer-to-peer electricity trading: Scenario building by business model matrix to identify new roles." *Energies* 14.15 (2021): 4438. Available at: https://www.mdpi.com/1996-1073/14/15/4438
- Capper, Timothy, et al. "A Systematic Literature Review of Peer-to-Peer, Community Self-Consumption, and Transactive Energy Market Models." Community Self-Consumption, and Transactive Energy Market Models (November 9, 2021) (2021). Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3959620

· Schwidtal, Jan Marc, et al. "Emerging business models in local energy markets: A systematic review of Peer-to-Peer, Community Self-Consumption, and Transactive Energy models." *Community Self-Consumption, and Transactive Energy models (January 06, 2022)* (2022). Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4032760

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[1] See https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/sb535.