

DOCKETED

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June 20, 2025

To: California Energy Commission
From: SCTCA Tribal Energy & Climate Collaborative

Re: Tribal Affairs and Tribal Energy Sovereignty Order Instituting an Informational Proceeding (OIIP)

Honorable Commissioners,

The Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) Tribal Energy & Climate Collaborative (TECC) appreciates the California Energy Commission opening its Informational Proceeding on Tribal Energy Sovereignty and Tribal Affairs. TECC participated in the June 10, 2025 Tribal Listening Session on Scope and Planned Engagement and wants to emphasize the following topics raised during the meeting:

A. Tribal Capacity Building

Tribes need sufficient capacity and diverse expertise to identify their needs and advance energy-related priorities, many of which are complex and technical. TECC is building this capacity and expertise for TECC Tribes by offering 1) technical and grant writing assistance from a network of trusted partners and experts, 2) trainings such as its monthly Advancing Tribes Interests at the CPUC webinar training series, and 3) standing forums for Tribes learn about opportunities and discuss issues with Tribal-serving agencies and organizations such as the Tribal Energy & Climate Collaborative eXchange (TECC-X) meetings. TECC recently established a standing team of regulatory experts that is dedicated to monitoring and influencing key CPUC proceedings on behalf of member Tribes. TECC is also supporting Tribal economic and workforce development activities, striving to create and grow revenue generating Tribal-led energy and climate ventures and economies. TECC recommends that the Tribal OIIP explore how to replicate and expand TECC's regional based capacity building model.

B. Tribal Led Engagement on Energy Topics of Interest

TECC appreciates CEC's effort through its Tribal OIIP to define a scope that covers all topics of interest to Tribes. TECC recommends that the Tribal OIIP explore opportunities for California Tribes to initiate and lead engagement with the State agencies and others (in addition to or instead of State-led Tribal engagement) on energy-related topics of interest to Tribes, which will require sufficient and ongoing capacity and expertise, as described in the prior section.

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C. Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity

TECC applauds CEC for being a leader, along with Strategic Growth Council, among State agencies offering funding agreements that do not require federally recognized Tribes to waive their sovereign immunity. Barona Band of Mission Indians, a TECC Tribe, secured a CEC Tribal Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, Planning, and Workforce Training and Development grant that will deploy EV infrastructure on the Barona Reservation and provide EV related planning and workforce training and development opportunities for all 25 TECC Tribes. Not requiring a limited waiver of sovereign immunity reinforces the sovereignty of Tribes and increases Tribal participation in CEC funding programs. TECC encourages CEC to expand funding opportunities that do not require limited waivers of sovereign immunity, including CEC funding opportunities that aren't only for Tribes.

TECC looks forward to continuing to engage with CEC on these and other important topics through the Tribal OIIP. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at jsimmons@socaltecc.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JS", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Josh Simmons
TECC Co-Director