

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	16-OIR-06
Project Title:	Senate Bill 350 Disadvantaged Community Advisory Group
TN #:	267931
Document Title:	Rod Matthews Comments - Team Chollas Community Solar Project
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Rod Matthews
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	12/15/2025 2:00:27 PM
Docketed Date:	12/15/2025

Comment Received From: Rod Matthews

Submitted On: 12/15/2025

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Team Chollas Community Solar Project

Executive Overview

The Team Chollas Community Solar Project represents exactly what California's environmental justice policies were designed to achieve—a comprehensive clean energy solution that transforms a retired landfill liability into a community asset while delivering tangible benefits to historically underserved residents in San Diego's Chollas/Oak Park neighborhoods (ZIP codes 92105 and 92115).

Core Infrastructure:

10 MW total distributed solar portfolio (two 5 MW projects)

40 MWh battery storage across both sites

20,000-25,000 households served with 100% renewable energy

Retired landfill remediation with methane capture integration

Municipal fleet electrification support for San Diego Street Department

Why This Matters for California's DAC Communities

1. **Environmental Justice at the Forefront** This isn't just another solar project—it's targeted remediation of decades of environmental harm. The Chollas/Oak Park community scores as disadvantaged on the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool due to proximity to underground storage tank releases, heavy traffic emissions, and active landfill methane emissions. We're not just adding clean energy; we're actively removing pollution sources while creating resilient power infrastructure.

2. **Authentic Community Ownership Model** Through our partnership with Raise Green, we're enabling fractional ownership for residents who've been historically excluded from wealth-building opportunities in the clean energy economy. Social RECs generated through Solar Stewards' program guarantee that 100% of social impact proceeds flow directly back to the community—not to outside investors. Community Benefits Agreements formalize these commitments with oversight from a community advisory board.

3. Economic Empowerment That's Real

Minimum 20% electricity discount for LMI households (saving \$480+ annually per household)

Local hiring mandates prioritizing women and people of color

Workforce development programs in solar installation, battery storage, and microgrid operations

Contracting preferences for minority and women-owned businesses through BOSS (Black Owners of Solar Services) network

4. Climate Resilience Infrastructure The 5 MW/20 MWh microgrids provide critical backup power to community resilience hubs and municipal operations. As climate events intensify, disadvantaged communities need energy systems that don't fail when they're needed most. This project delivers that security while supporting San Diego's net-zero transition.

The Partnership That Makes It Work

This isn't development to the community—it's development with the community:

San Diego Urban Sustainability Coalition (15+ years grassroots organizing in Southeast San Diego)

Eddie Price (SDUSC founder, 30+ year environmental justice organizer, Mayor's Sustainable Energy Advisory Board member)

- Brevian Energy (local microgrid expertise serving LMI communities)
- Midflare Corporation (utility-scale solar development experience)
- Solar Stewards (Social REC program facilitators)
- Raise Green (community ownership financing)

Recommendations for DACAG Consideration

1. Policy Precedent: This project demonstrates how state DAC programs can integrate multiple benefits—energy affordability, environmental remediation, community ownership, workforce development, and climate resilience—into unified solutions rather than siloed initiatives.

2. Replicability Framework: The Community Benefits Agreement structure and Social REC model here create a template for ensuring DAC benefits are legally binding, not just aspirational, in future projects statewide.

3. Landfill-to-Solar Pathway: California has hundreds of retired landfills in disadvantaged communities. This project proves the technical and financial viability of transforming environmental liabilities into community-owned clean energy assets.

4. Municipal Partnership Model: The integration of city fleet electrification with community solar demonstrates how municipal climate commitments can be leveraged to deliver direct DAC benefits rather than operating in parallel.

Bottom Line

The Team Chollas project checks every box California's environmental justice framework envisions: community-led, economically empowering, environmentally restorative, and climate-forward. It deserves DACAG's attention as a model for how distributed generation can deliver the Five Meaningful Benefits outlined in federal and state clean energy equity programs.

We're not just building solar arrays—we're building community power in every sense of the term. This is what environmental justice looks like when you let the community lead.