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CEC Permitting Processes for Geothermal Facilities

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CEC Jurisdictional Overview

- Exclusive permitting authority over thermal power plants 50 MW and larger
- Condensed optional permitting authority for eligible clean energy facilities
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency for facilities seeking certification or exemption
- Certification processes include engineering evaluations, and compliance with local and state laws assessments.





Types of Applications

- **Notice of Intent (NOI)***
- **Application for Certification (AFC)**
- **Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE)**
- **Opt-In Certification (Opt-In)**

**Meant to determine suitability of proposed sites. Most facility types are not required to file an NOI application*



Application for Certification

- CEC certificate is in lieu of any local or state permit*
- Certificate supersedes any local or state laws and regulations
- AFC process is a *certified regulatory program*
- Process overseen by a committee of two commissioners
- Evidentiary hearing conducted by committee
- Committee makes certification recommendation to full Commission
- CEC Decision within 12 months of complete application

**Development of geothermal steam field and drilling of injection/production wells require permits from CalGEM and/or county*



Sonoma County, California



Small Power Plant Exemption

- Eligible to thermal power plants **100 MW or less**
- May be exempted from CEC's exclusive authority if CEC finds:
 - No significant effects on the environment or energy resources
- CEC's review follows requirements of CEQA
 - Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) / Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

If SPPE is granted, applicant must obtain all necessary permits to build and operate facility



Opt-In Certification Program

- Optional, not mandatory, to file with the CEC
- No evidentiary proceeding
- 270-day period to reach a decision
- Partial in lieu authority
- Not a certified regulatory program but CEQA-plus:
 - ✓ Community benefits agreement
 - ✓ Labor and prevailing wage requirements
- In effect until June 30, 2030

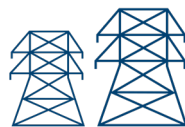




Opt-In Certification Program Eligible Facilities



Solar photovoltaic or terrestrial wind electrical generating power plants 50 megawatts (MW) or greater



Certain transmission lines associated with these generating and storage facilities



Energy storage systems capable of storing 200 megawatt-hours (MWh) or more



Specified facilities that manufacture or assembly clean energy or storage technologies or related components



Stationary power plants using any source of thermal energy, excluding fossil or nuclear fuels, 50 MW or greater, and geothermal of any size



Hydrogen production facilities (not derived from fossil fuel feedstock) and associated onsite storage and processing facilities



More Information

Power Plant Licensing

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/power-plant-licensing>

Opt-In Certification Program

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program>



Thank you!