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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

STAFF WORKSHOP

In the Matter of: ) Docket No.
) 18-MISC-03
Draft Guidelines for the Renewable )
Energy for Agriculture Program )
___________________________________

NOTICE OF STAFF WORKSHOP
DISCUSSION ON THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY
COMMISSION’S DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE RENEWABLE
ENERGY FOR AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
CHARLES IMBRECHT HEARING ROOM
1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2018
9:00 A.M.

Reported By:
Gigi Lastra
APPEARANCES

CEC Staff:

Geoffrey Dodson
Sherrill Neidich
Natalie Lee

Public Comments: (* Via telephone and/or WebEx)

John McMillan, San Diego State University Research Foundation
Jennifer Gray, California Air Resources Board
Claire Warshaw
*Ed Noma
*Curtis
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Geoffrey Dodson

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JUNE 20, 2018  9:03 a.m.

MR. DODSON: Hi. Good morning, everyone. My name is Geoff Dodson and I'm the Lead staff member for the Renewable Energy for Agriculture Program also known by the acronym REAP.

I need to go over a couple of quick housekeeping items before we start our presentation. For those of you in the room, in the event of an emergency please follow CEC staff out to the nearest exit and proceed to Roosevelt Park located across the street. Restrooms are located outside to your right, just before the exit.

The presentation is being recorded and we have a court reporter taking notes as well. Both the presentation and the transcript from this presentation will be posted on the REAP webpage.

For participants joining us over the WebEx, I ask that you please keep your lines muted while the presenter is talking. You can submit your questions privately through the chat function. And after the presentation is complete we will answer questions from those here in the room, then we will read and respond to questions submitted from our WebEx participants.

And finally, we will unmute lines here for any remote participants that wish to ask any questions. And
for those of you in the room too we also have a Public Adviser with blue cards to submit questions if you choose.

During today's workshop we'll be going over the draft guidelines for the Renewable Energy for Agriculture Program and then we want to hear from you. When public comment is complete, we will review next steps and make sure everyone has contact information to follow up on the next steps.

The Draft REAP Guidelines were recently released to the public and are available on the program webpage. I will have my colleague here send out a link to those of you on WebEx to access those draft guidelines in a moment. We have also provided hard copies to attendees here today.

The purpose of today's workshop is to review key highlights from these draft guidelines and solicit public feedback on the proposed details. It will be helpful to hold all questions until the end of the presentation.

As this is a draft and has not been adopted at a business meeting, the details presented here are proposals. We will welcome public comment on all items. When these guidelines are finalized they will form the basis for this program. The grant solicitation, when released, will provide detailed submittal instructions.

Authorized with the passage of Assembly Bill 109 referred to as the Budget Act of 2017, the Renewable Energy
for Agriculture Program, REAP, will provide $5.7 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, also known as GGRF, to assist agriculture operations with the installation of onsite renewable energy technology with an emphasis on providing assistance in disadvantaged and low-income communities.

The draft guidelines presented today were informed by feedback received in two public workshops in February and March, public comments from these workshops and those submitted to the REAP docket, as well as meetings with relevant state agencies such as the Air Resources Board, the Department of Food and Agriculture, and meetings with industry associations.

The Guidelines comply with the California Air Resources Board funding guidelines for agencies that administer California climate investments.

As our funding comes from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund monies, the primary goal of the program is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Applicants are required to use GHG quantification methodology that has been developed or approved by the California Air Resources Board to quantify emissions reductions.

In addition, as directed by legislation authorizing this program the primary goal of the program is to assist agriculture operations with the installation of
onsite renewable technology. Projects are expected to reduce demand for fossil fuels and grid electricity, which has the potential for cost savings.

Additionally, we hope to fund projects that realize additional co-benefits including reductions in local air pollution and additional benefits to the local community.

As with all GGRF-funded programs there is an emphasis on providing assistance in disadvantaged and low-income communities as defined by Senate Bill 535 and Assembly Bill 1550.

The California Air Resources Board is responsible for developing guidance on the quantification methodology to estimate greenhouse gas emission reductions and other co-benefits from REAP projects. The methodology is currently under development. We hope to have this ready prior to the Energy Commission's release of the grant funding opportunity. However, if it is not available at that time the Energy Commission's prescribed methodology to estimate greenhouse gas reductions stated in the measurement and verification section of our draft guidelines will be used by applicants.

The Air Resources Board is developing co-benefit assessment methodologies for use in evaluating project co-benefits.
As noted earlier, the legislation authorizing the funding for this program directs us to support projects that install renewable energy in the agricultural sector. For the REAP, funding will only be provided to projects that are proposed for implementation on properties engaged in agricultural operations as defined here, and located in California.

The proposed definition of an agricultural operation is provided here and in the guidelines. This definition is based on the definition used in the FARMER Program, which is administered by the Air Resources Board, however it is not identical.

So here are some of the basic eligibility requirements necessary to submit an application for grant funding. The applicant must be the owner or operator of the site for the proposed project. If the operator is submitting the application the owner of any property affected by the proposed project must provide written support for, and approval for, the proposed project.

The project must reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the installation and the use of the renewable energy as defined in the grant solicitation.

MR. O'SHEA: Hold on one second.

MR. DODSON: Yes?

MR. O'SHEA: We're getting feedback and we don't
have audio on anything right now.

MR. DODSON: So I'm just hearing word that WebEx participants might have a little bit of trouble with audio. If you are correctly hearing audio let them know.

(Off mic colloquy re: audio issues.)

MR. DODSON: So I apologize for that. It looks like we had a little technical difficulty with the audio. I'm going to go ahead and go back through these slides since it sounds like everyone on WebEx was unable to hear us for the previous slides that were presented.

All right, again sorry about that. If you have any further audio technical problems please let us know through the chat functions, so that I can be alerted about that and sorry to everyone in the room, a small little difficult here.

All right, so for the benefit of those on WebEx I'm just going to go over a few slides again from the relevant beginning ones.

Okay. So for the participants joining us over the WebEx, please keep your lines muted while the presenter is talking. You can submit your questions privately through the chat function. After the presentation is complete we will answer questions from those in the room, then we will read and respond to questions submitted from our WebEx participants.
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The project must reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the installation and the use of renewable energy as defined in the grant solicitation. Battery storage for electric vehicles charging must be paired with an onsite renewable energy generation to be eligible for an award.

REAP anticipates that grants will be awarded under one funding cycle with a total funding amount of $5.7 million. The Energy Commission may conduct additional funding cycles if funds are available or if additional funds are allocated to the REAP or may increase the total funding under the initial solicitation.
The project proposal can receive grant funding anywhere in the range from $50,000 to $250,000 or up to a maximum of $300,000 if the proposal includes the installation of a new electric vehicle charger paired with renewable energy generation.

If the applicant is pursuing funding from multiple sources of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund then the applicant will need to describe all existing or potential GGRF sources in that application.

Here is an overview of what we consider eligible technology. The proposed technology must be proven and commercially available. Beta technology and research and development projects are not eligible for REAP. A project that installs onsite renewable energy may also include other elements such as the removal or replacement of a diesel pump replaced by an electric pump that is served by the renewable energy system, retrofits and upgrades of existing equipment that is served at least partially by the installed renewable energy project, battery storage paired to the installed renewable energy project or electric vehicle and equipment charging paired with the installed renewable energy project.

Our scoring committee will involve experts to determine project effectiveness and potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
The CEC has two years to encumber funds from the budget authorization date. And grant recipients have up to four years to spend the funds. All funds allocated in the fiscal year of '17-'18 budget cycle must be encumbered by June 30th of 2019. All funds awarded from the fiscal year '17-'18 budget cycle must be liquidated by June 30th, 2023.

If additional funds are allocated to the REAP in the future, funding encumbrance and liquidation requirements will be defined in future grant solicitations.

The grant solicitation will be released at the CEC website. The grant solicitation will contain all necessary information to submit an application and will be consistent with these guidelines.

The solicitation will include the schedule, scoring criteria, application forms and other required templates. Interested parties are strongly encouraged to participate in a pre-application workshop to review the solicitation with potential applicants. Following a workshop Energy Commission staff will provide an opportunity for written comments about the solicitation. Staff responses to all questions will be posted on the Energy Commission's website.

Applications will be evaluated and scored based on responses to the information requested in the solicitation. To evaluate applications, the Energy
Commission will organize an evaluation committee consisting of Energy Commission staff possessing applicable energy or agriculture operations, expertise or both. Subject matter experts from other agencies may also be invited to serve as scorers or technical reviewers.

Proposals will be out and evaluated in two stages: application screening and technical scoring.

Application screening is a series of pass/fail administrative requirements as described in the draft guidelines. Applications that do not pass all of the administrative screening requirements are disqualified and will not move on to the scoring stage.

Proposals that pass the application screening process are then scored by an evaluation committee based on the technical scoring criteria outlined in the draft guidelines.

When scoring for solicitations is complete the applications will be ranked in order of final score and a Notice of Proposed Award, also known as NOPA, showing the rank of each applicant will be posted on the Energy Commission website. The NOPA will include additional information such as the applicant name, a brief description of the proposed project, funds requested and staff recommended funding amount and whether the project is expected to provide benefits to priority populations and
score status.

As mentioned previously, application screening is a series of pass/fail requirements as described in Table 3 of the draft guidelines. Applications must pass all items to move forward to the technical scoring.

The technical scoring criterion is detailed in Table 4 of the draft guidelines. This includes: project eligibility, which describes the agricultural operation and demonstrates that the project meets all eligibility requirements.

Technical merit and need, which justifies renewable energy technology used. And that it will provide a quantifiable GHG emission reduction including printouts in the completed program calculator, which will be released as described earlier.

The technical approach, which describes the approach to performing the work and identifies any barriers such as permitting, schedules for operations, and any other limitations in completing the project.

Impact and benefits, which is justifiable and reasonable quantitative estimate of annual GHG emission reduction and a cost benefit analysis of funding relative to the GHG remission and reduction.

Preference considerations, which describes projects in underserved locations, projects that provide
additional co-benefits and improved air quality. And the
project applicant will provide matched funding.

    Priority population considerations, which provide
supporting documentation that a project is located in a
disadvantaged or low-income community.

    The Energy Commission anticipates that REAP funds
will be allocated to projects in priority populations as
described here in this slide. The Energy Commission refers
to the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 model when referencing a
disadvantaged community. All GGRF funded solicitations
will provide preference points for projects located in, and
benefiting priority populations. Applicants must describe
their efforts to determine and meaningfully address common
needs of priority populations.

    Preference points will be awarded based on
whether the project meets the requirements indicated in the
guidance provided by the Air Resources Board.

    Funding will be first awarded to the top rank
applicant with a passing score and then to the next rank
applicant until all funds have been expended. After the
NOPA is released all applicants will be notified of the
results and an Energy Commission representative will begin
working with each awardee to develop an agreement for the
awarded project. Once an agreement is finalized they will
be presented and approved at an Energy Commission business
meeting.

After approval at an Energy Commission business meeting the grant agreement will be signed by all parties and work may begin on the project.

This slide here shows a summary of our estimated solicitation timeline and project timeline from this point forward. Public comments will be due later this month. Staff will use these comments to inform any changes that are made before the final REAP guidelines are developed and presented to the Commission for adoption at a business meeting.

The solicitation materials are expected to be available in August and proposals will be due in September. We recognize that this timing impacts harvesting seasons, however unfortunately to meet encumbrance deadlines and allow sufficient time for project implementation we were not able to delay the application period to any later in the year.

Staff will complete the review and issue the NOPA as previously discussed. As agreements are finalized with awardees each final agreement will be presented at an Energy Commission business meeting for approval. All agreements must be executed no later than June 30th of 2019,

So that provides a summary of our current draft
guidelines that we have out. And at this point we'd like to open it up for questions and comments from the public on these draft guidelines, so anyone in the room first?

(Off mic colloquy.)

MR. DODSON: Yeah, for our court reporter please provide your name and the same goes for anyone online, too. Please provide your name, so that our court reporter can get this down.

MR. MCMILLAN: John McMillan with San Diego State University. We have an agricultural production that was gifted to us a number of years ago. How big does the operation have to be in terms of size or revenue in order to qualify?

MR. DODSON: Good question, there is not a defined size for the agricultural operation itself. Just kind of our minimum funding award is $50,000, so if you're talking about too small of a farm maybe. We're looking for projects that are applying for some kind of technology that will at least be --

MR. MCMILLAN: So something that would meet the 20 acre, $100,000 revenue size (indiscernible)?

MR. DODSON: Yeah, pretty much. I mean, there's no definition at this point for a minimal or a large maximum size.

MR. MCMILLAN: Great.
MS. GRAY: I'm Jennifer Gray. I work with CARB and I'm wondering if the solar ag pumps that you may fund through this project, do they have to be connected to the grid?

MR. DODSON: We are not requiring interconnection.

MS. NEIDICH: Are there any other questions?

MR. DODSON: All right, so we'll open it up to WebEx participants. I'll ask first for any of those that submitted comments through the chat function. Do you have any of those?

MR. O'SHEA: None at the moment

MR. DODSON: Okay, none. If anyone would like to speak through the WebEx just please use the raise hand function and we'll get your question answered.

Do we have another question in the room?

MR. MCMILLAN: So on the use of the property it said "non-research functions" but if it's through a use, like what if we have students out there supporting the endeavors of the agricultural operation, but it's also being sold under the wholesale market?

MR. DODSON: Based on the way you described that, that sounds like something that would be fine. But depending on the full circumstances that might be something that we need to look more carefully at. But as you
described it I don't see any issues immediately with that.

MS. NEIDICH: We do suggest that you submit comments with that information and they can answer.

MR. DODSON: Yeah, we'll go ahead. Any questions that are submitted regarding these, we'll answer them and post them online as well.

MS. LEE: This is Natalie Lee, Deputy Director for the Renewable Energy Division. Just one clarification, the research and development reference is in regard to the renewable energy technology being employed. The operation is not limited by that restriction.

MR. DODSON: Thanks for that clarification.

MR. O'SHEA: Our first question comes from chat from Ed Noma asking if energy efficiency will be allowed?

MR. DODSON: Strictly energy efficient projects, I mean a whole range of projects could be available, but the primary purpose is something that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and so I'm not sure that specifically energy efficiency only would meet that. But I'll have another clarification on this.

MS. LEE: Thanks. This is Natalie Lee again. Just to clarify, energy efficiency as a project component is acceptable. But the project must also install renewable energy technology.

(Off mic colloquy.)
MS. WARSHAW: Hi. I just wondered if homesteaders are going to be considered people that could apply, because they are supporting an agricultural livelihood.

MR. DODSON: That's a good question actually. That might be something I need to look more into at this point. We might need to follow up on that with you. That's actually a question maybe that would be helpful if you could submit online as well, so that we can provide a written, posted response on our website as well. Thank you for your question.

MS. WARSHAW: As a comment or in the chat box here?

MR. DODSON: Oh, as a comment on our docket system. That way it will be part of the public record and we can respond, which will open to everyone as well.

Which by the way I should mention, for anyone that is interested in posting a comment through our docketing system please be sure to include some kind of contact information, so that we can follow up with you. We did have a couple of comments in the past where we were not given any good contact information to follow it back up on. So I just want to make sure that we do need a way to follow up with you, so we can help answer your question.

Thank you for your question and I'll move on to
the next one, yeah.

MR. O'SHEA: This is for (indiscernible) Curtis (indiscernible).


CURTIS: Hello. Yes, Curtis here. I've got a question about if I could use the funds to expand (indiscernible) full generation site?

MR. DODSON: I believe that would be okay, however the funding would only apply to the new portion of the projects. And the quantification methodology that we use will only calculate whatever new portion of the project is being replaced or retrofitted.

So yeah, like I mentioned earlier we're okay with retrofits and replacements and upgrades, but the funding itself will pretty much be tied to whatever the new portion is; if that makes sense.

CURTIS: It does. Is the funding tied to the business or to a specific like generation type like (indiscernible) site or partials?

MR. DODSON: The land parcel that the project is actually installed on will pretty much be the operation in question here, so whether or not that's tied directly some business or another might not be -- there could be different situations. Mainly the land parcel is what we're looking at. I'm not sure if that's --
CURTIS: I only ask, because (indiscernible) full
generation types that I'd like to apply for projects, for
each or combined is kind of I guess the question that I
would need to do (indiscernible).

MR. DODSON: So sorry, can you give us a little
bit more specific information? It's a little hard to kind
of think through every scenario without full details, I
guess.

CURTIS: Yeah, so I have two full generating
sites on two different (indiscernible) acre grids.

MR. DODSON: Yeah.

CURTIS: And one site I would like to expand and
then the other site I would like to do battery storage as
well as an electric vehicle charging station. But is it I
have to put all of that up into one proposal or if I can do
two separate proposals?

MR. DODSON: If is it on the same property or
same kind of operation business?

CURTIS: Yes.

MS. DODSON: (Indiscernible)

MS. LEE: (Indiscernible) Let me ask if it's
possible if you can follow up with Geoff after the workshop
with some real specifics. That's an interesting scenario,
because the requirement for vehicle charging and battery
storage is it must be paired with the renewable energy
technology that is being installed under this funding. So I would like to be as specific as possible in the follow up.

CURTIS: Thank you.

MR. DODSON: Yeah, another question in the room we're going to take.

MR. MCMILLAN: John McMillan again. Are multiple projects allowable if they're on completely independent sites?

MR. DODSON: Yes. And I believe if they're totally different sites you would actually submit different applications.

MR. MCMILLAN: Great. And then the second one is does it have to be in an IOU service territory would an IID (phonetic) count?

MR. DODSON: Anywhere in the state of California. Do we have any questions on WebEx?

MR. O'SHEA: No.

MR. DODSON: Okay. I'll give it a second for people to think about any other questions they might have or comments. And just as a reminder this is not the last opportunity to provide comment.

As noted on the coming slide actually, which I'll put up now, you have until June 29th at 5:00 p.m. to submit official written comments. That can be done either online
or through the mail. The link is posted here in our presentation and the presentation itself will be posted online as well. And I'll have my colleague provide the link to the program webpage if she hasn't already, and from that webpage you can access all documents and notices and any other helpful information relevant to this presentation at our workshop.

MR. O'SHEA: I've got one more in chat.

MR. DODSON: And yeah, we're still open to questions and comments too, so if you have any more feel free. But I will take another question right now.

MS. GRAY: Jennifer Gray from CARB. Do you have a lot of (indiscernible) funding (indiscernible) and if somebody is trying to get some equipment (indiscernible) might work together? Would they apply for one before the other or something like that?

MR. DODSON: Good question. I don't think there's any need to apply for one before the other or in any particular order. It is okay to utilize different funding sources for projects. As mentioned earlier though, in certain situations you'll have to disclose those potential funding sources when you apply just so that we're aware of what other potential funding might be going into this particular project. But there's no exclusion at this point and time of not being able to apply to our program if
you have other funding sources.

And then do you have a follow-up clarification?

MS. LEE: Yeah, the only thing that I will add is that we are working with the other programs (indiscernible) and our goal is to allow each program to serve its purpose and allow the funding to reach the broadest range of projects that there is. So if we see a project that comes in just for the installation of renewable technology that identifies they are in coordination applying for a retrofit of equipment that would expand the value of that renewable installation, then we'll recognize that in the project evaluation. It's not dependent on receiving the FARMER funding, but we do want to allow the funding under FARMER to reach its highest goals as well.

MR. DODSON: Yeah, we're going to move to a WebEx question.

MR. O'SHEA: This is coming from Alex on the chat. He said regarding dairy digesters, other equipment generally needs to be upgraded in order to build the digester properly. Can those costs also be covered?

MR. DODSON: it does not sound like in that, the way you described, something that would be covered under our program. There is a separate program called the Food Processor Investment Program, which sounds like something that's a little bit more geared toward your questions
potentially. But I think we're focused a little bit more on initial agriculture operations.

MS. NEIDICH: And (indiscernible) you can submit comments and we can respond to those as well.

MR. O'SHEA: And that's all I've got for you.

MS. DODSON: Are there any other questions?

MS. LEE: Hello. Natalie Lee again, and I just want to recognize if there are any participants that do not want to submit personal information through the docket for response, please reach out to Geoff directly. His contact information is posted over there, but it was noted by our Public Adviser that that may be a concern for some of our docketing responses.

MR. DODSON: So while you think about any other questions or comments that come up, right now just a reminder again, please we do welcome any feedback that we can get. These guidelines are informed in part by all these comments that we get through our docketing system. And as Natalie just mentioned feel free to contact me directly if you have questions that involve more sensitive information.

And I guess for now it looks like we don't have any current questions, so I guess we'll kind of wrap it up here. Anyone else in the room have any questions or? No?

Thanks for coming out and we look forward to all
the comments that we get up until the June 29th 5:00 p.m. deadline that we have set in accordance with this program.

    So thank you very much.

    (Whereupon, at 9:39 a.m., the workshop was adjourned)

    --oOo--
REPORTER’S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 26th day of June, 2018.

_________________________________
Eduwiges Lastra
CER-915
TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were transcribed by me, a certified transcriber and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 26th day of June, 2018.

_________________
Myra Severtson
Certified Transcriber
AAERT No. CET**D-852