

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	21-IEPR-03
Project Title:	Electricity and Natural Gas Demand Forecast
TN #:	239866
Document Title:	Response letter to Valley Clean Energy Alliance Application for Confidential Designation
Description:	N/A
Filer:	Ngoc Tran
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	9/29/2021 1:49:53 PM
Docketed Date:	9/29/2021



September 29, 2021

Via Email

Mitch Sears
Interim General Manager
Valley Clean Energy Alliance (VCEA)
604 2nd Street
Davis, California 95616
Mitch.Sears@valleycleanenergy.org

Application for Confidential Designation for Data in Integrated Energy Policy Report, Docket 21-IEPR-03

Dear Mitch Sears:

The California Energy Commission (CEC) received the confidentiality application submitted by Valley Clean Energy Alliance (VCEA or applicant) on June 30, 2021, for specified data contained in the 2021 Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR). Specifically, confidentiality is sought for:

Form 8.1a (CCA)

Budget Appropriations or Actual Costs and Cost Projections by Major Expense Category, to wit:

Rows 36-42: Contract amounts, in dollars, related to power purchase agreements, for 2020-2032; and

Row 62: Total Revenue Requirements, in dollars, for 2020-2032.

Form 8.1b (CCA)

Revenue Requirements Allocation, in dollars, for 2020-2032, to wit:

Row 9: Total Revenue Requirements, in dollars, for 2020-2032.

Confidential designation of this data is requested pursuant to Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 2505, on the grounds that the information is not otherwise publicly available or readily discoverable in the form or detail provided at this time, that the information is market sensitive and constitutes trade secrets in terms of disclosing applicant's very recent wholesale and retail activities, and that the release of this information will result in loss of competitive advantage in the wholesale and retail marketplaces relative to applicant's ability to negotiate future contracts for the purchase or resale of energy and/or capacity at wholesale, or negotiation of contracts with retail customers. The application also states that confidentiality is appropriate under Government Code section 6255(a) because the public interest in nondisclosure clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

A properly filed Application for Confidentiality shall be granted under Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 2505(a)(3)(A), "if the applicant makes a reasonable claim that the Public Records Act or other provision of law authorizes the [CEC] to keep the record confidential." The California Public Records Act allows for the non-disclosure of corporate proprietary information including trade secrets. (Gov. Code, sections 6254(k), 6276.44; see also Evid. Code, section 1060; Civ. Code, section 3426.1.) Government Code section 6255 also permits the CEC to withhold a public record where "the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record."

California courts have traditionally used the following definition of trade secret:

A trade secret may consist of any formula, pattern, device, or compilation of information which is used in one's business, and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advantage over competitors who do not know or use it.

(*Uribe v. Howe* (1971) 19 Cal.App.3d 194, 207-208, from the Restatement of Torts, vol. 4, section 757, comment b, p. 5.)

Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 2505(a)(1)(D), states that if an applicant for confidential designation believes that the record should not be disclosed because it contains trade secrets, or its disclosure would otherwise cause loss of a competitive advantage, an application shall state: 1) the specific nature of the advantage; 2) how the advantage would be lost; 3) the value of the information to an applicant; and 4) the ease or difficulty with which the information could be legitimately acquired or duplicated by others.

Here, the application states that the data constitutes trade secrets or otherwise commercially sensitive data, which has not been disclosed to anyone except the applicant's employees, government agencies, or California Independent System Operator, (California ISO) subject to confidentiality projections. The application states that the applicant operates in the competitive and dynamic retail energy markets and is a net purchaser in the competitive wholesale markets, so the confidentiality of data regarding its retail and wholesale market positions is a competitive advantage. The application also states that disclosure of this information can be used to directly or indirectly determine the applicant's market position and would result in a loss of competitive advantage in the wholesale and retail marketplaces relative to its ability to negotiate future contracts for the purchase or resale of energy, or with respect to negotiation of contracts with retail customers.

The application does not state whether the confidential information contained in the forms may be disclosed if it is aggregated on a statewide basis with the same type of data reported by other energy service providers or load serving entities, and steps are

Mitch Sears
September 29, 2021
Page 3

taken to ensure that the applicant's specific data cannot be ascertained. The application further requests that the data be kept confidential for three years.

Based on this information, the confidentiality application is hereby approved. The specified data in Forms 8.1a (CCA) and 8.1b (CCA) for the years 2020-2032 will remain confidential through December 31, 2024, or until it is publicly released, whichever is earlier.

Please file the public version of all other forms (1.1b, 1.3, 3, and 4) to the docket. For Form 8.1a (CCA), this grant of confidentiality is only for those specified portions listed above, which are marked by yellow highlighting on Forms 8.1a (CCA) and 8.1b (CCA) themselves. Please file public versions of Forms 8.1a (CCA) and 8.1b (CCA) to the docket. These public documents should be redacted only to the point necessary to protect confidentiality.

Be advised that persons may petition to inspect or copy records that the CEC has designated as confidential, the executive director may disclose or release records previously designated as confidential in certain circumstances, and the CEC may hold a hearing to determine the confidentiality of its records on its own motion or on a motion by CEC staff. The procedures and criteria for disclosing or releasing, filing, reviewing, and acting upon such petitions or motions are set forth in the Title 20, California Code of Regulations, sections 2506-2508.

You may request confidentiality for similar data in a future annual report without submitting an application by following the procedures set forth in Title 20, California Code of Regulations, section 2505(a)(4).

If you have any questions, please contact Raj K. Dixit, attorney, at raj.dixit@energy.ca.gov or (916) 776-3055.

Sincerely,



Drew Bohan
Executive Director