

**DOCKETED**

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*Comment Received From: San Diego State University  
Submitted On: 5/11/2022  
Docket Number: 20-LITHIUM-01*

**Letter of Support for SDSU Brawley Expansion - Berkshire & Hathaway Energy**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*



**JONATHAN M. WEISGALL**  
VICE PRESIDENT, LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

May 10, 2022

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: San Diego State University Expansion Plan**

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am writing on behalf of Berkshire Hathaway Energy and our subsidiary BHE Renewables to express our strong support for San Diego State University's (SDSU) expansion plan for an Innovation District and STEM program at its Brawley campus in Imperial County. We urge you to include SDSU's \$80 million request for a STEM building to support workforce needs related to lithium extraction in the Lithium Valley Budget Package.

The future of Lithium Valley creates an ideal opportunity to invest in STEM research and curriculum in this region, and it will have a significant local economic impact. This type of project supports the vision outlined in the Imperial County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which calls for training and job opportunities that help bolster economic growth in the region. A dedicated pipeline for local students to receive the training to fulfill the workforce needs would have a transformative effect. Moreover, expanding STEM capabilities at the SDSU Brawley campus would allow for students to complete their education there without having to commute to the main campus in San Diego.

SDSU's expansion plan for an Innovation District and investment in STEM programs goes hand in hand with other Imperial County initiatives that will need well-educated students for their workforces, and its proximity to Imperial County's lithium recovery operations creates an ideal location for STEM research and curriculum. At BHE Renewables, for example, we are about to commission a one-tenth commercial scale lithium recovery plant at our geothermal facilities. If successful, this will lead to a full-scale lithium recovery project that will require a workforce of about 200 employees, including engineers (electrical, chemical, mechanical), chemists, control operators, resource technicians, environmental specialists, and the like. Many of these jobs will require a strong STEM education background.

Imperial County is rich in resources, but these resources need educational training and guidance to help students move into good-paying jobs that will lead to upward mobility, economic prosperity, and community engagement. This is why we have made substantial gifts both to lower schools (Westmorland Unified School District) and to Imperial Valley College for

**BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY ENERGY**

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scholarships for students taking STEM courses. We therefore support SDSU's request funding in the revised budget.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [jmweisgall@brkenegy.com](mailto:jmweisgall@brkenegy.com) or 202-262-8513.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan M. Weisgall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jonathan M. Weisgall  
Vice President, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs