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Need for microgrids for climate adaptation

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



350 East Bay
350 San Francisco
350 Marin
350 Sonoma
Napa Climate NOW!

November 27, 2018

Commissioners
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA. 95814

RE: Written Comments on CEC IEPR Workshop on Climate Adaptation

Dear Commissioners.

350 Bay Area is a grassroots climate activist organization. We advocate for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Bay Area and beyond with the goal of eliminating them as soon as possible. We would like to point out that while adapting to climate should be part of our decisions about energy going forward, we can mitigate at the same time with microgrids. We need to be able to have energy in emergencies when transmission lines or other equipment are either sabotaged or, as has been happening lately, power shutoffs and wildfires make getting energy difficult. It has to be a part of energy delivery strategy going forward to decentralize, emphasizing distributed generation as much as possible to save costs and have a more resilient grid that allows islands of power in emergencies. With more roof-top solar hooked together with storage in microgrids we will create less climate breakdown in the long term while we also create islands of energy service separate from transmission. We need to properly incentivize this direction. The benefits to the community demand it even if the investor owned utilities want everyone to pay for transmission even when they are using it less or not at all.

What we need is a system that measures energy use much closer to the meter than happens now which requires reform of the way transmission access charges are calculated. The way it is done currently incentivizes energy coming from a long distance. We likely will always need some of that, but we need a more balanced approach that does not have ratepayers who rely almost totally on microgrids, or even their own individual roof-top solar and storage, to be paying as much for transmission as those who rely on transmission more. A move in this direction will move us away from having to build more expensive transmission lines and infrastructure. We need to do this now as everyone is evaluating why the system has become so problematic.

We would like to suggest the Advanced Community Energy model referred to in the Center for Climate Protection's (now called The Climate Center) comment (#229513 on 8/22/19 Docket 19-IEPR-10) is a good one to look at. The expenses involved in excess transmission costs that would not be needed when more DER is created – possibly through microgrids - should be considered when determining the viability of a more decentralized, flexible system that can be utilized for emergencies as well as in everyday service. The recent hearing on PSPS on Nov. 18th in the Senate Energy and Utilities Committee during which panel after panel of people reported the loss of costs to their businesses, ability to help with health problems in hospitals, the difficulty of fire departments in responding, and the serious damage to the health of

individuals who were stuck in situations with no way to get the power for the devices they depend upon or even to be able to call for help, all point to the emergency nature of having an alternative that microgrids provide. You have to wonder at the huge costs we would not be paying if we had been able to have islands of energy going during these power shutoffs. Safety first as the CEO of PG&E in the hearing said after noting that he works for shareholders but it should be pointed out this is a utility that has been concerned about how microgrids would affect their system.

And, finally, the more microgrids, the fewer greenhouse gas emissions and the quicker we as a state get to our climate goals in a cost efficient manner, which is what 350 Bay Area would like to see.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ken Jones
Clean Energy Campaign Lead
350 Bay Area
1005 S. Eliseo Dr.
Greenbrae, CA
415 935-9030