

DOCKET

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CEC Presentation

How to determine “Priority Areas” for Renewable Energy Projects

<http://www.ccpda.org/solar>

May 10, 2012

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Preferred Sites

- All rooftops
- Covered Parking areas
- Adjacent to substations and transmission lines with available capacity
- Brownfield sites
- Landfills (open and closed)
- Grazing lands

Non Preferred Sites

- Prime Ag Lands
- Ag Lands under Williamson Act contracts
- Important Farm Lands
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Locally Important Farm Lands

Community Support

- It might be good to develop a program to allow a county to gauge community support for streamlining project approvals for solar PV projects
- Solar PV is controversial to surrounding property owners...at a minimum
- Does the state's goal match a community's values? We must answer this question.

The State's Partner...Counties

- CA Counties are an arm of the state
- The state does NOT issue and Building Permits...that's cities and counties
- The state does NOT authorize Land Uses in CA, that's cities and counties
- CA Counties oversee Land Use for millions of acres of land

...A Plan

- Wouldn't it be great if CA had a cohesive plan/strategy of prioritized locations where solar PV projects SHOULD be installed?
- Wouldn't it be great if CA had 'shovel ready' sites for solar PV projects?
- If we had this, solar PV projects could move forward at an accelerated rate

Map These

- Preferred sites for interconnection
 - Preferred sites for permitting, and
 - Preferred sites for economic development
-
- Where is the sweet spot? That could be a good starting point of where to focus...

Combining/Overlay Zones

- Counties need to prepare Program Level EIRs and amend GPs/ZOs for Energy Combining/Overlay Zones
- Address Cumulative Impacts – Air Quality, GHG, Biological and streamline Planning Process
- Energy Overlay in a County that would evaluate land for
 - Proximity to available Utility infrastructure
 - Avoidance of Prime Ag lands
 - Avoidance of sensitive environmental habitat
 - Adjacent to DG users

Question 5

Would conducting programmatic environmental review minimize the level of project-specific environmental review? Can the DRECP be a model for other regions of California? What would be the next steps if we did a programmatic review for another region of California?

Question 5

Answer: Any time a programmatic EIR is completed, it helps strengthen and streamline subsequent environmental review.

It also helps to identify mitigation measures that could be built into the overlay ordinance as development standards (in other words a self-mitigating overlay to some extent).

It will not be able to review the level of detail that a focused document would at the “Project Level”. However, cumulative impacts (related to Air Quality, GHG, Biological) are often more appropriately assessed at the programmatic level, which considers a larger context.

It is also likely that a programmatic approach is more appropriate in any case, since an overlay would involve amendment to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

An overlay should carefully consider all existing General Plan goals and policies, constraint mapping, and base land use designations. This is also best done at a programmatic level.

Question 6

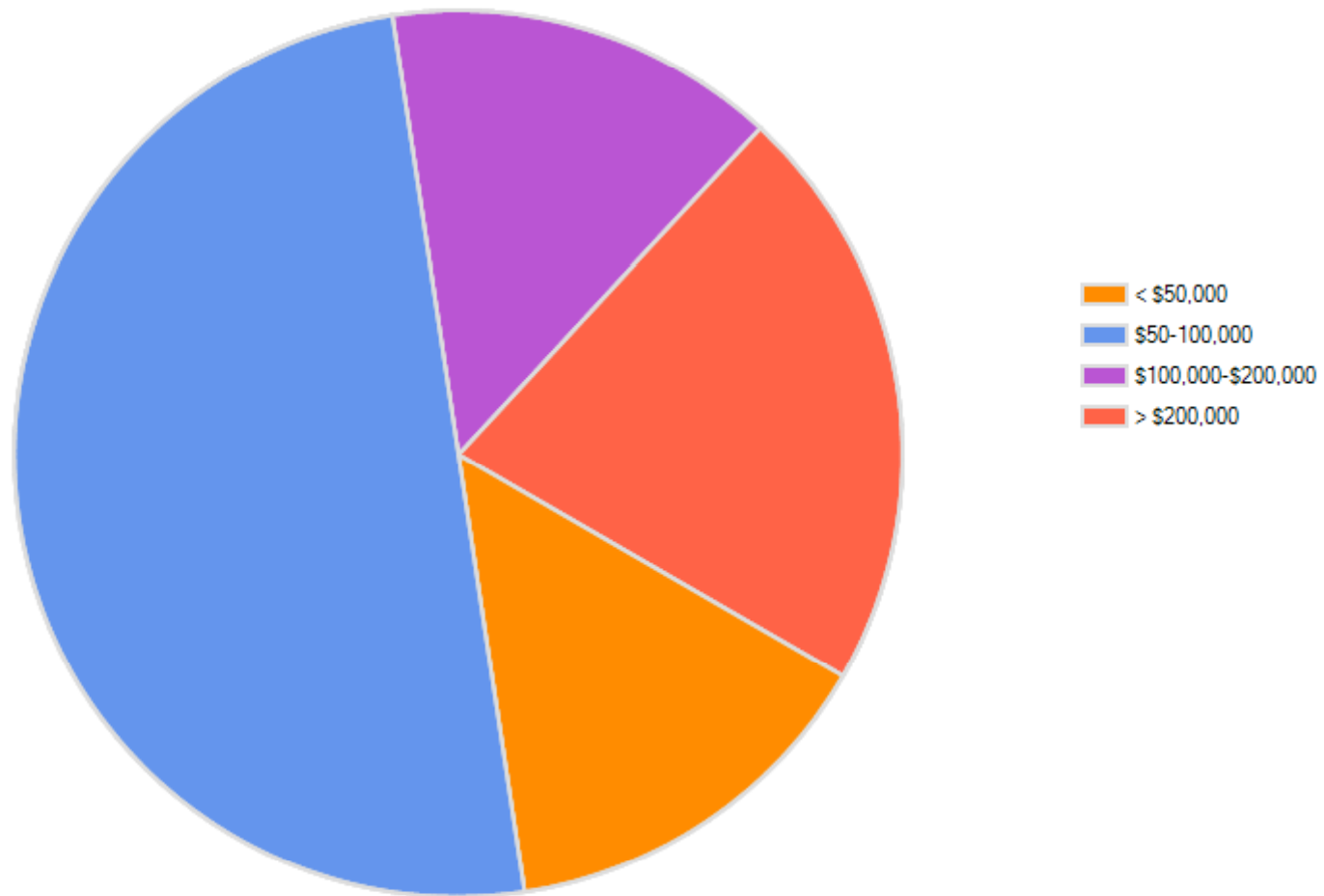
How are local governments accommodating renewable energy development (i.e. general plans, combining districts, ordinances, development agreements)? Are there any examples of recent procurement programs that reflect site preferences?

Question 6

Answer: CCPDA survey this week

- 22/58 county responses
- Only 1 county has an Overlay Zone for Energy
- It is acting as a Holding Zone pending future CEQA/EIR
- 92.3% say the reason they haven't done it yet is Lack Of Funding
- Est Avg cost is around \$100K, max of \$250K
- We'll need to provide some education on the benefits of this approach...future workshops

If you've thought about developing a Renewable Energy Combining Zone/Overlay which would streamline the Planning process, and lack of funding is your challenge, how much funding to you think you would need to complete the necessary GPA/Rezone/CEQA for the Renewable Energy Combining Zone/Overlay?



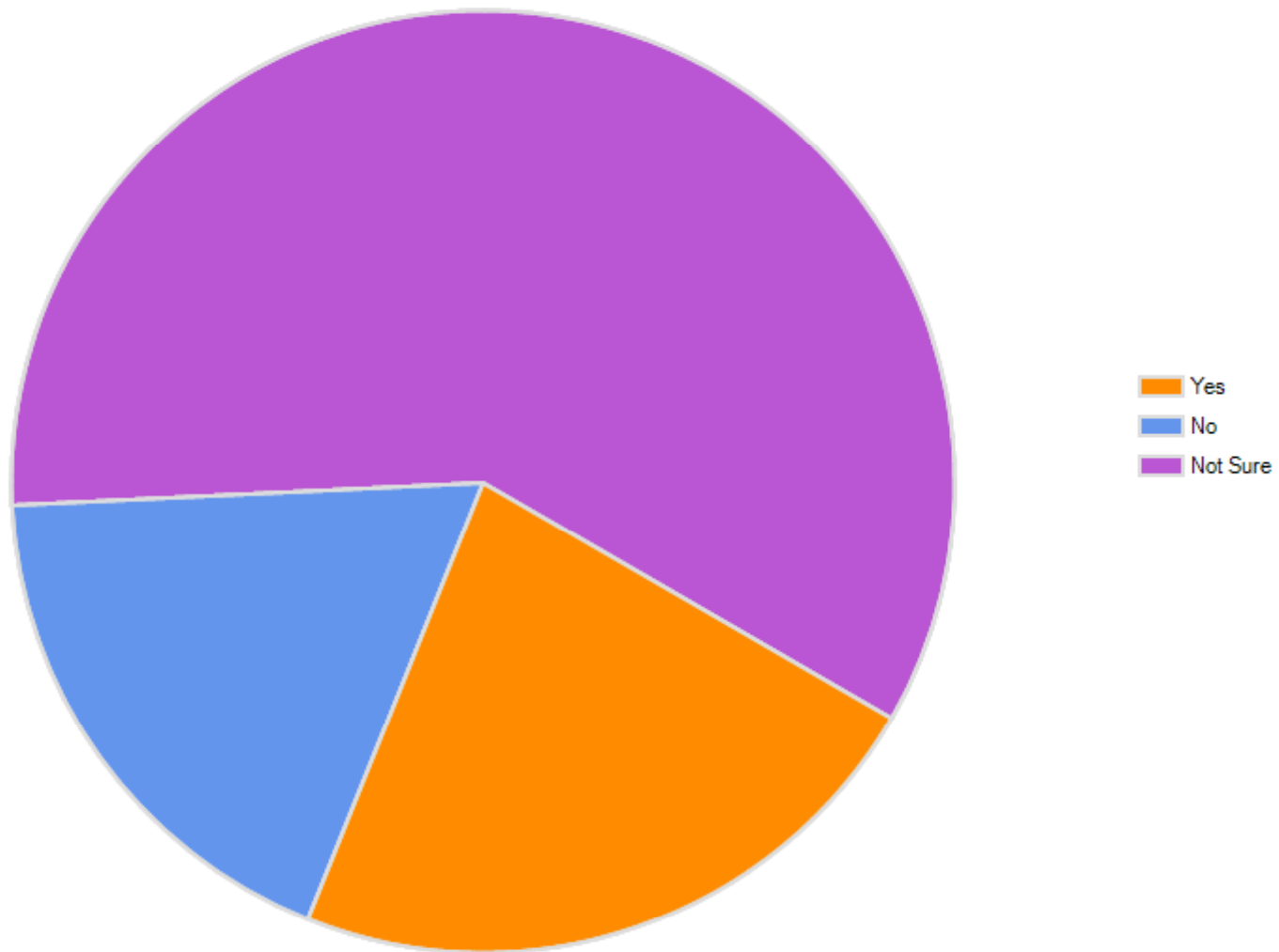
Question 7

- How are local and state governments balancing renewable energy development and farmland preservation?

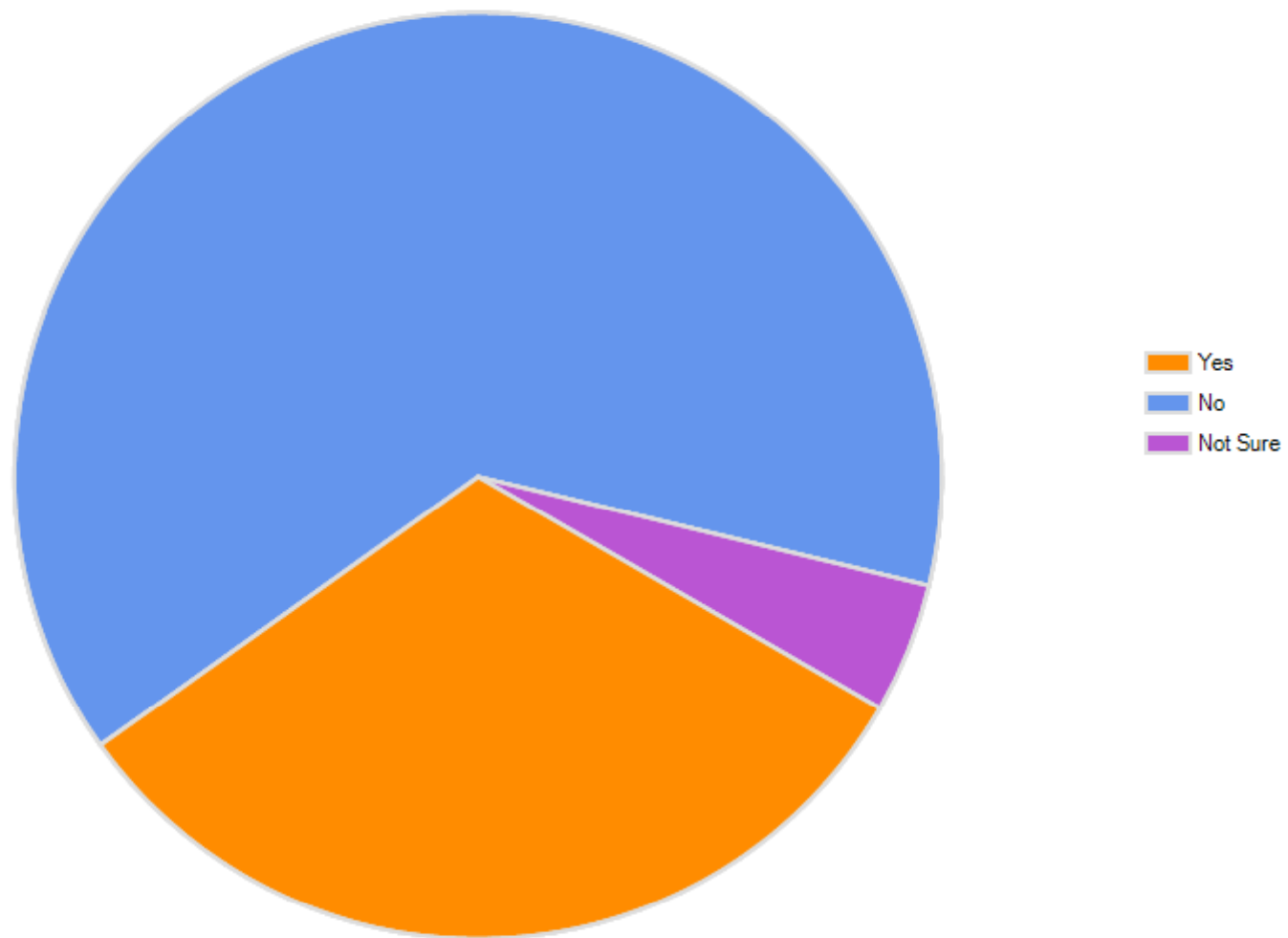
Question 7

- ANSWER: With respect to Butte County (and the CCPDA Model Ordinance), we are drafting a zoning ordinance that will direct major solar development, which has the greatest potential to impact prime agricultural lands to grazing lands and other non-prime lands of lesser quality that are not under Williamson Act contracts or will enter into a solar use easement pursuant to State Law.
- Areas considered prime will still have the ability to develop small scale accessory solar (< 6 acres) that supports on-site AG operations and small farm uses.

**Does your County plan on utilizing the recently enacted SB 618 to allow the
rescission of a Williamson Act contract for a solar use easement?**



Has there been landowner or solar developer interest regarding the use of solar-use easements as a means of exiting a Williamson Act contract for a solar PV development?



Question 8

- How can local and state governments advance renewable energy development on EPA tracked sites?

Question 8

Answer:

- CCPDA survey, only 1 out of 22 counties has done this (Energy Overlay)
- We need Grant Funds to complete these
- We need to ID the Brownfield areas and inform the public of the opportunity
- We need Training for counties/public/consultants which can create a process that can be trusted

Question 9

- How are local governments using the land use planning processes to capture economic benefits of renewable energy development? Are local governments providing incentives to attract renewable energy investment?

Question 9

- An Energy Overlay will provide an incentive by reducing “Planning Process” time and providing more “certainty” to investors
- This sends a signal to investors that the County wants solar PV in these locations
- Further refinements based on size/location
- State Farmland Mapping needs updating
- Find ways to incentivize solar PV in covering parking lots, cattle grazing, etc.

Fee Question: What is the cost for a Building Permit in your County for a roof mounted solar PV system for a single family residence?

