

VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY ALLIANCE

Staff Report – Item 9

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Alisa Lembke, Board Clerk / Administrative Analyst

SUBJECT: Summaries of Community Advisory Committee (CAC) December 19, 2024, January 23, 2025 meetings and 2024 Task Group Year-end Reports

DATE: February 13, 2025

This report summarizes the Community Advisory Committee’s meetings held in person and via Zoom webinar on Thursday, December 19, 2024 and Thursday, January 23, 2025. In addition, copies of the CAC’s Task Group 2024 Year-end Reports are attached for your information.

Thursday, December 19, 2024:

- A. Discussed and sought recommendation on GHG-free allocations from large hydro and nuclear resources.** VCE Staff Gordon Samuel reviewed the history of VCE’s acceptance of PG&E offerings of carbon free hydro allocations, but not nuclear allocations. He reviewed regulatory changes that prompted staff to reassess staff’s recommendation to accept nuclear GHG-free allocations. The CAC and Staff discussed: VCE’s Power Content Label; customer perception of nuclear; monetary impacts; and risks. The CAC recommended that the Board accept both the large hydro and nuclear GHG-free attributes and authorize VCE’s Executive Officer to enter into agreements with PG&E to accept the allocations (6-2-0).
- B. Received preliminary 2025 Operating Budget and customer rates update.** VCE Staff Edward Burnham presented an overview of the draft 2025 Operating Budget, key factors influencing the 2025 budget and customer rates, and highlights of proposed updates to VCE’s Reserve and Dividend policies. The CAC and Staff discussed: Power Charge Indifference Adjustment (PCIA) costs; possible customer rate discounts; revenue investment; long term fixed costs, modifications to VCE’s Reserve and Dividend policies; investment credit rating; affordability; and, customer outreach and retainment of Customers. This was an informational item.

Thursday, January 23, 2025: The CAC did not have a quorum; therefore, no action was taken and all Agenda items were moved to the CAC’s February 27, 2025 meeting.

Attachments: 2024 Task Group Year-end Reports:

1. Legislative/Regulatory Task Group
2. Programs and Outreach Task Group
3. Bioenergy Task Group

LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY TASK GROUP 2024 YEAR END REPORT

Members: Lorenzo Kristov
Jennifer Rindahl
Rahul Athalye
Ari Halberstadt (as of October 2024)

Primary Staff Contacts: Mitch Sears, Yvonne Hunter

2024 Charge

Work with VCE staff and VCE's lobbyist to:

- Provide feedback, technical information and strategic advice to VCE staff on key legislative and regulatory issues facing VCE and the CCA community in general in 2024, including legislation and regulatory issues related to VCE's Legislative Platform, Strategic Plan and Environmental Justice Statement.
- Provide periodic reports to the CAC about legislation and regulatory issues.
- Solicit recommendations from the CAC to inform VCE positions on key legislation and regulatory proceedings.
- Work with staff and VCE's regulatory consultant to enhance the Task Group's and CAC's understanding of regulatory proceedings and their relationship to legislative matters, including ways to enhance VCE's Legislative Platform to include regulatory issues and possibly VCE's regulatory engagement.
- Contribute to VCE's engagement with legislators and other stakeholders.
- Discuss strategies to engage regulatory agencies and stakeholders to achieve a more level playing field for procuring local resources, address Resource Adequacy challenges, and to advance dynamic pricing programs, such as AgFIT, and other grid services opportunities, for VCE and other CCAs.
- Receive periodic updates about and discuss CalCCA legislative and regulatory priorities, emphasizing how VCE can most effectively contribute.
- Work with staff to periodically review and update VCE's Legislative Platform for consideration by the CAC and VCE Board.

Highlights of Accomplishments in 2024

During 2024, the Leg/Reg Task Group met bi-weekly with staff and VCE's lobbyist and worked closely with them to:

1. Review pending legislation, provide feedback, technical and policy information, and strategic guidance on legislative and regulatory issues; discuss and recommend VCE positions and legislative strategies for pending legislation and regulatory issues. Special attention was devoted to discussing and advising on how best to engage legislators and regulators on issues of key importance to CalCCA and VCE.

2. Provide input on selected regulatory proceedings of interest to VCE. These included the CPUC's Dynamic Pricing, Slice of Day (Resource Adequacy) proceedings.
3. Provide periodic updates to the CAC on key legislative and regulatory issues.
4. Receive and discuss periodic updates about CalCCA legislative activities, including critical opportunities for VCE to engage and lobby its legislators.
5. Discuss how best to incorporate regulatory issues into the draft 2025 Legislative Platform. Prepare draft 2025 Legislative and Regulatory Platform (that incorporates regulatory issues more completely) for review by the CAC and VCE board of directors.
6. Receive periodic updates on the West Wide Pathways Initiative, which is working to create a Regional Organization among the western states.

Challenges

1. Identifying those legislative and regulatory topics where VCE has a significant interest and can make a difference given VCE's limited resources. This is particularly challenging with regard to CPUC proceedings because there are so many that affect retail electricity customers, they continue to proliferate, they are extremely chronophagic and there is no VCE staff person assigned to track regulatory activities.
2. Continuing to examine how best to work with CalCCA and other individual CCAs to expand dynamic pricing programs through the CPUC, CEC or other agencies.
3. How to be most effective in the legislative and regulatory arenas given VCE's limited resources.

Opportunities

1. Play a role in educating VCE staff, the CAC, VCE board and CalCCA about policy and regulatory developments and other ways to advance opportunities and benefits for deploying distributed energy resources (DER).
2. Play a role in educating VCE staff, the CAC and the VCE board about the ongoing efforts of the West Wide Pathways Initiative and how it might affect VCE and community choice more generally.
3. Continue to expand legislative opportunities in which VCE may become more engaged with CalCCA.

**PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH TASK GROUP (POTG)
2024 YEAR END REPORT**

Members: Keith Taylor (Chair)
David Springer (Co-Chair)
Mark Aulman
Diccon Westworth

Staff Lead: Rebecca Kuczynski

2024 Charge:

Collaborate with VCE staff and consultants on policies, procedures and programs aimed at improving the customer experience and customer satisfaction in VCE, including:

1. Assist in the development of public information strategies, planning, and materials related to VCE customer marketing, outreach, policies and programs. As requested by staff, review draft materials and provide comments as appropriate; assist with customer-facing community outreach to, and liaison with, member communities.
2. Help define audience segments within VCE's service area and consult on appropriate messages and communications approaches; provide a sounding board to assist in message development and copy testing. Conduct review of marketing materials at the draft (pre-release) stage upon request from staff.
3. Assist with identification of statewide program opportunities and development of strategies for disseminating information on eligibility, rebate amounts, stacked incentives, and other details; assist Staff with finding and applying for external funding for potential programs.
4. Collaborate with Staff on an annual update to the 3-year Programs Plan, discuss 2024 program implementation with Staff; assist with the update of 2022 program design/implementation forms and program prioritization for implementation in 2024.
5. As requested by the Director of Customer Care and Marketing, provide outreach and messaging support for the efforts of other CAC task groups, as well as outreach to VCE's participating jurisdictions to encourage collaborative dissemination regarding programs, energy savings tips, rebates/incentives etc. on their websites and social media platforms.
6. Provide summaries and updates at monthly CAC meetings on Task Group activities.

Highlights of Accomplishments

2024 is the first year of the merged Programs and Task Group and Outreach Task Group.

VCE launched:

- a. Electric Advisor Program
 - i. POTG provided feedback on several items: rep training, website look/feel, resources, importance of being up-to-date on code etc.
 - ii. Emphasis on equity - ensuring program was oriented toward customers having trouble paying their bills and also renters (not just owners)
- b. VGI (Vehicle Grid Integration)
 - i. POTG provided input on the importance of being able to charge bidirectionally. Staff took this into consideration when determining whether to participate in PG&E's VGI pilot or to craft its own.
- c. HFP (Hourly Flex Pricing)
 - i. POTG provided input on design and implementation of the Hourly Flex Pricing (aka Expanded AgFIT) pilots
- d. [REACT](#) (Rural Electrification And Charging Program)
 - i. POTG provided input on the charging program and introduced ideas about successfully marketing the program to customers.
- e. POTG provided input and guidance on:
 - i. Publicizing lower rates
 - ii. Countering misinformation
 - iii. EE + saving money - customers
- f. Attendance at CalCCA conference.
 - i. Significant showing by VCE staff, board, and community advisory committee members.
 - ii. Lessons learned
 1. The CCAs are growing into a powerful, sophisticated bloc of proto-utilities.
 2. There is an enormous amount of entrepreneurship within the CCA system.
 3. VCE staff and representatives would be well served to be keyed into the statewide network, especially as innovative programs come to fruition at other CCAs.
 - 4.
- g. Administrative and managerial
 - i. Messaging assistance from POTG.
 1. POTG members assisted with elements of messaging for POTG and VCE more generally. Specifically with regard to
 - a. Provide incentives (typically last awhile and then dry-up)
 - b. Promote Concierge Service (requires an understanding of motivators, cost-effectiveness for customers, and funding approaches)

- c. Promote things customers can do to save money and energy at the same time (awnings, window film, etc.). VCE policies on rates and power portfolio mix, to help with challenges around misinformation on VCE's role in setting power rates.

[Remains a work in progress.](#)

- ii. POTG documentation held in an organized Google Drive folder for future POTG leadership
 1. [POTG 2024 guidance memo](#)
 2. [POTG Master Folder](#)

Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Ongoing - Limited staff time to develop, market, and manage programs, especially as programs continue to grow in complexity and scope.
 - Partnerships have proven to be time-consuming but productive.
- Messaging what a CCA is, and its advantages. It remains a somewhat challenging model to convey to the public. How to do so in a way that is truthful, but also avoids the "TMI" (too-much-information) challenge?

Opportunities:

- Continue to learn from experiences of other CCAs on programs that have worked well for their customers.
 - Joint action with other CCAs to overcome VCE's attenuated staffing and volunteerism.
 - CCPower is a great example. Could other joint activities be pooled?
 - Alternatively, potential to collaborate with other public utilities.
 - Messaging.
 - Retention Analysis is an area that could help catalyze messaging.
 - Leveraging innovative programs to message.
 - AgFit
- Business and economic development opportunities in working with large load customers.
 - Engagement opportunity with the electric co-op sector.

**VALLEY CLEAN ENERGY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN TASK GROUP CHARGE

Members: Marsha Baird
Lorenzo Kristov
Rahul Athalye

Staff Lead: Edward Burnham

2023 Charge:

The CAC Strategic Plan Task Group will assist VCE Staff with the planning and development of a rolling strategic plan and updates to current objectives through 2026. The current 3-year Strategic Plan covers 2021-23 and was approved by the Board on October 8, 2020.

Specifically, the Task Group will:

- (1) review existing organizational strategic documents – vision statement, mission statement, SWOT analysis, and strategic plan.
- (2) work with Staff to develop 2024-26 Strategic Plan objectives,
- (3) provide input and feedback to Staff on a working draft 2024-26 Strategic Plan to present to the CAC and Board,
- (4) collaborate with Staff develop guidelines for structure and best practices of rolling strategic plan for future years,
- (5) provide summaries and updates at monthly CAC meetings on Task Group activities.