Protecting California Energy Policies and Investments

As Congress considers new proposals to address climate change and advance carbon-free investments, it is important to recognize early actions undertaken by utilities to reduce emissions—and ensure that California's energy policies are not undermined and recent public investments in needed baseload and flexible resources are not stranded.

Recognize and Protect California's Policies and Infrastructure Investments

California is a national leader in energy policy—and NCPA has been on the front lines of those efforts. The State has adopted a series of increasing renewable portfolio targets and is now on a path to achieve 100% carbon-free energy by 2045. California's carbon policy leadership has placed the state on a path to reduce its carbon footprint to 40% below 1990 levels by the year 2030. State efforts on energy efficiency, energy storage, and electrification of the transportation sector are also significant. Any new federal policy should recognize and accommodate these actions. In designing any new federal policies—from a carbon tax to a federal zero-emissions portfolio requirement—it must ensure smooth integration with California's policies and full recognition and crediting of the resulting investments.

NCPA has Long-Standing Commitment to Clean Energy

NCPA, a joint-action agency established in 1968, is a consortium of locally-owned utility systems who invested early in renewable resources to ensure a clean, reliable, and affordable energy supply for our member communities and districts. Collectively, our members provide power to approximately 700,000 electricity customers and maintain a resource portfolio that is over 50% carbon-free.

NCPA's Resource Mix

NCPA has long supported environmentally responsible investments—even when lower cost alternatives were available. Our investments in geothermal steam, hydroelectric, and natural gas facilities comprise a generation portfolio that is among the cleanest in the nation.

The Geysers Geothermal Project

The Geysers, located 75 miles north of San Francisco, is the single largest geothermal steam field in the world. In the early 1980s, NCPA began operating a facility that is presently capable of producing 102 MW of baseload energy. The facility captures steam from beneath the earth's surface to generate clean electricity. In 1997, NCPA created the world's first, wastewater geothermal-injection system to recharge the production wells at the Geysers. Since steam extracted from the Geysers is not naturally replenished by groundwater, a supplementary source of water is needed. NCPA contracted with Lake County Sanitation District to take its treated wastewater effluent and—utilizing two one-megawatt solar arrays—pump

it 26 miles for injection down deep into the geothermal reservoir, dramatically extending the life of this naturally depleting, base-load resource. Had NCPA not taken action, the Geysers facilities would have ceased production in 2013. Instead, this critical base-load renewable resource will continue to generate clean, reliable power for decades to come.

Hydroelectric Projects

NCPA's 259-megawatt hydroelectric project, built in the 1980s in Calaveras County, captures falling water to produce renewable, carbon-free electricity while protecting recreational and environmental resources. The project is uniquely positioned to facilitate the integration of renewables into California's electricity grid, further helping the state achieve Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and carbon reduction goals. NCPA members also partnered with the federal government to fund and maintain the multipurpose Central Valley Project (CVP). CVP power provides, on average, 40% of our members' energy needs through renewable hydropower resources.

The Lodi Energy Center

NCPA's most recent generation project is the 300-megawatt Lodi Energy Center. Unlike other natural gas plants, the Lodi Energy Center was the first in the nation to use "fast start" technology, making it an extremely flexible resource that is capable of operating to meet market needs. Under normal conditions, it cycles up and down in response to energy demand and system reliability needs. During recent droughts, when hydroelectric production was curtailed to conserve water, the Lodi Energy Center played a critical role in producing consistent baseload energy needed to help maintain statewide system reliability and integrate intermittent renewable energy resources.

Community Solar

In addition, NCPA is in the process of developing a combined 23 megawatts of community solar projects to serve six NCPA member communities. These projects allow utility customers, who may not have otherwise been able to cost-effectively install solar directly on their homes or businesses, to buy or lease solar panels from a centralized project. Economies of scale are achieved by working collectively through NCPA, and this approach collectively provides member communities with access to clean energy at a lower cost. As well, some NCPA members are evaluating the potential for pairing their community solar with onsite energy storage to capture additional renewable capacity. Today, NCPA member communities meet or exceed California's aggressive RPS requirements.