



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
Agenda Date: March 3, 2026
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Jesús Armas, Director, Community Services Department
Contact: Garrett Wong, Division Manager, Sustainability
SUBJECT: Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) 2028-2035 Business Plan

^{DS}
JA

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Director of the Community Services Department, with the concurrence of the member agencies, to support the submission of the Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) 2028-2035 Business Plan by County of Ventura to the California Public Utilities Commission; and
- b) Determine that the recommended action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), as the action involves the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) is a collaboration between the counties of San Luis Obispo, Ventura and Santa Barbara to deliver energy-saving programs and industry trainings to reduce energy use in the built environment. 3C-REN has enabled the County to receive millions of ratepayer funds in funding for incentives that directly benefit households and businesses with energy and cost savings, and for permanent staff to manage energy programs.

In order to maintain and expand funds to implement programs, 3C-REN must submit a 2028-2035 Business Plan to be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Ventura County serves as Portfolio Administrator, and in this capacity will submit the Business Plan on behalf of the three member agencies by the March 16 submittal deadline.

The County is budgeted to receive nearly \$7 million over four years (2028-2031) to fund staff and related expenses associated with managing 3C-REN.

If the Business Plan is approved by the CPUC, staff will return to the Board to authorize the execution of an amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the three counties to reflect the approved scope and budget.

Discussion:

The goal of the Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) is to deliver energy-saving programs and industry trainings that help reduce energy use, strengthen local job markets, and support efforts to achieve climate goals. 3C-REN is instrumental to achieving the goals and objectives of the County’s 2030 Climate Action Plan.

3C-REN offers:

- Incentives for energy efficiency and electrification for single-family homes, multifamily properties and commercial customers;
- Training and workforce development programs for industry professionals and building officials; and
- Technical assistance programs for agricultural operations and facilities seeking to improve their energy resilience.

3C-REN has enabled the County to receive millions of ratepayer dollars in funding for incentives that directly benefit households and businesses with energy and cost savings, and for permanent staff to manage energy programs.

3C-REN is jointly managed by the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura, with Ventura being the Portfolio Administrator on behalf of 3C-REN under the authority of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). All Administrators must prepare and submit a Business Plan every 5 years for approval of expenses and program concepts to be implemented. The next Business Plan would cover calendar years 2028 through 2035.

Based on past, current and projected performance of programs, 3C-REN is requesting utility ratepayer funds to maintain and expand its budget for staff labor, contractor and consultant costs, incentives and other expenses.

Of this, the Community Services Department is budgeted to receive nearly \$7 million to cover staff and related expenses, increasing 3C-REN revenue by 35% over the next 4 years (from FY 26/27).

Table 1. 3C-REN Business Plan County of Santa Barbara Budget*

	2028	2029	2030	2031	TOTAL
Labor	\$1,306,700	\$1,372,000	\$1,440,600	\$1,512,600	\$5,631,900
Expenses	\$311,500	\$322,400	\$333,700	\$345,400	\$1,313,000
TOTAL	\$1,618,200	\$1,694,400	\$1,774,300	\$1,858,000	\$6,944,900

**3C-REN's fiscal year begins January 1. 2028 funds would be available mid-FY 27/28. The budgets are rounded and subject to change until approved by the CPUC. The other counties also receive funding for labor and expenses, and all 3C-REN expenses are distributed across the tri-county region.*

This increased budget will help to support 3C-REN activities and increase resources made available to the community.

The Business Plan is due to the CPUC on March 16, 2026. If approved, staff will return to the Board to authorize the execution of an amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the three counties to reflect the approved scope and budget.

Background:

On October 4, 2018, the CPUC officially approved formation of the Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN) and its business plan requesting \$50 million to administer energy programs. Ventura County was designated as the Portfolio Administrator.

On February 26, 2019, the County entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Ventura County to design and implement programs under the auspices of 3C-REN.

On June 29, 2023, the CPUC approved the 3C-REN 2024-2035 Business Plan of \$155 million to administer energy programs.

On September 27, 2024, the Board approved the 2030 Climate Action Plan, which includes measures to reduce fossil fuel energy use in residential and commercial buildings.

On July 1, 2025, staff provided the Board an overview of the 3C-REN 2024 Impact Report, highlighting energy projects, events and trainings implemented across the county.

Performance Measure:

Number of residential and commercial energy projects, total value of incentives dispersed, total energy savings, estimated greenhouse gas emission savings

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

If approved by the CPUC, staff will incorporate the revenue into future fiscal year budgets similar to prior years.

Fiscal Analysis:

If approved, the Business Plan would authorize the County to receive funding for staff and expenses associated with 3C-REN.

Funding Source	FY [27/28]	FY [28/29]	FY [29/30]	FY [31/32]	Total
General Fund					
State	\$1,618,200	\$1,694,400	\$1,774,300	\$1,858,000	\$6,944,900
Federal					
Fees					
Total	\$1,618,200	\$1,694,400	\$1,774,300	\$1,858,000	\$6,944,900

Staffing Impacts:

Funding under the current Business Plan already funds a majority of cost for 3.5 FTE in the Sustainability Division.

Attachments:

Attachment A – 3C-REN 2028-2035 Business Plan Summary

Attachment B – 3C-REN 2024 Annual Impact Report

Contact Information:

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