



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

**Department Name:** GS/P&D/CSD/PW  
**Department No.:** 063  
**For Agenda Of:** January 6, 2015  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Tme:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** General Services Matthew P. Pontes, Director (560-1011)  
Planning and Development Glenn S. Russell, PhD., Director (568-2085)  
Community Services Renee Bahl, Interim Director (568-2467)  
Public Works Scott McGolpin, Director Public Works (568-3005)

Contact Info: Greg Chanis, General Services Assistant Director (568-3096)  
Heather Allen, Planner, Planning and Development (884-8082)  
Angie Hacker, emPower Central Coast Manager (568-3515)

**SUBJECT: American Solar Transformation Initiative Participation (ASTI)**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Risk Management:**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the American Solar Transformation Initiative (ASTI) Municipal Agency Participation Form ("Participation Form") (Attachment 1);
- b) Direct staff in General Services, Planning and Development, Community Services and Public Works to work with ASTI Program Managers to deliver participation benefits to Santa Barbara County.
- c) Determine that the approval and execution of the Participation Form is not a project and thus not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b) (5) and direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption (Attachment 3).

**Summary Text:**

The American Solar Transformation Initiative (ASTI) represents a public-private partnership committed to advancing solar power adoption across the United States. ASTI aims to make it easier, faster and more affordable to install solar in participating communities in order to capture the economic and environmental benefits of solar power. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's

(DOE) Rooftop Solar Challenge II program as part of the DOE's SunShot Initiative, which seeks to make solar electricity cost competitive without subsidies by 2020. Over 100 municipalities across the country have already opted to participate in the program.

By signing the Participation Form (Attachment 1), the County gains access to a variety of free services that aim to make solar technology more accessible, thereby accelerating the County's progress towards existing Board adopted priorities. These services include technical assistance, and a customized online "Solar Roadmap," which helps municipalities use national best practices and take actionable steps to increase installations of solar systems.

**Background:**

The Center for Sustainable Energy, Strategic Energy Innovations, the California Office of Planning and Research, and Optony, Inc. (a research and consulting services firm) with funding from the DOE, partnered to bring the ASTI to California. ASTI builds upon the success of the Southwest Solar Transformation Initiative and is part of the DOE's Rooftop Solar Challenge.

**Participation Benefits and Expectations**

Participating municipal partners receive many benefits at no cost as described in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2, which include:

- Identify major market transformation hurdles in the targeted program areas.
- Quantify and document the solar potential across residential and commercial rooftops in each agency's jurisdiction in terms of economic activity, jobs and environmental benefits.
- Receive technical assistance to integrate solar-friendly codes and standards that will dramatically improve and simplify permitting and interconnection processes, time and costs.
- Peer interaction opportunities to learn from similar organizations and be recognized for efforts.
- Guidance on applicable solar project financial and economic models for residential and commercial property owners.
- Opportunities to drive community and industry engagement on solar and related clean energy through education and adoption campaigns.
- Early access to new DOE funded efforts, including residential aggregation and financing online tools and many others projects to reduce costs and increase market activity.
- Customized Solar Roadmap - a platform to determine applicable solar best practices for local implementation and tracking progress toward regional and national goals. These goals are organized in focus areas that include:
  - Permitting and inspection processes;
  - Planning and zoning guidelines;
  - Financing tools and programs;
  - Utility interconnection processes; and
  - Solar market development programs.

If the Board of Supervisors opts to participate, then staff in General Services, Planning and Development, Community Services and Public Works is authorized to work with ASTI Program Managers through 2015 to provide information, input and feedback, and to adopt strategies where

appropriate. Municipal agency participant expectations and commitments are further detailed in Attachment 1.

### ASTI Can Help County Build Upon Solar Successes and Priorities

Over the last several years, the County has made strides in addressing its clean energy priorities. Recent accomplishments include the development and expansion of the emPower Central Coast home energy improvement program, and installation of several solar energy projects, including two 1-megawatt installations, bringing the County's electric portfolio to approximately 20% renewables. Approving the recommended actions and participating in the ASTI program is anticipated to help the County accelerate its progress on previously established clean energy related policy priorities:

- In September 2009, the Board adopted Resolution 09-059, committing the County to take immediate, cost effective, and coordinated steps to reduce the County's collective greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in order to help protect the community from the effects of climate change.
- In March 2013, the Board directed staff to develop the Energy and Climate Action Plan (ECAP) with a 15% reduction in GHG emissions from a 2007 baseline level. The ECAP includes several measures and action items that aim to accelerate solar development throughout the unincorporated area.
- In June 2010, the Board received the Sustainability Action Plan, which determined the location and type of energy that is being used throughout the County, as well as the amount of GHG emissions emitted, as a whole, by all County departments.
- In April 2013, the Board accepted the Energy Action Plan, which sets forth the County's fiscal year 2008 electricity consumption as a baseline and sets forth an energy reduction goal equal to 25% of the energy consumed during fiscal year 2008. The EAP includes countywide strategies and implementation measures to reduce the County's energy consumption. These strategies include implementing additional solar energy projects on County facilities.
- In 2012, 2013 and 2014, the Board has proclaimed October as Energy Awareness Month, acknowledging the importance of transitioning to clean energy.
- In February 2014, the Board adopted Resolution 14-049, requiring all new Santa Barbara County owned facilities and major renovations beginning design after 2025 be constructed as Zero Net Energy (ZNE) Facilities, with an interim target for 50% of new facilities beginning design after 2020 to be ZNE. County departments shall also take measures toward achieving ZNE for 50% of the square footage of existing Santa Barbara County owned facilities by 2025 and the remaining 50% by 2035.
- 2014-2015 County Legislative Principles include "Community Sustainability," highlighting the intent to promote economic stability and environmental stewardship through participation in the growing green economy.

### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The County does not have to pay ASTI Program Managers for costs associated with services provided as described in the Participation Form. Staffing related costs are described below.

**Staffing Impacts:**

<b><u>Legal Positions:</u></b>	<b><u>FTEs:</u></b>
.1	.1

**Key Participation Form Risks:**

The Participation Form commits the County to working with ASTI Program Managers through March 2015. This form also includes no repercussions for, or enforcement mechanisms against, Municipal Agency Participants that do not fulfill expectations.

It is estimated that existing staff in General Services, Public Works, Planning and Development and Community Services will coordinate regularly and spend roughly 50 hours per department on oversight and coordination of ASTI efforts, the equivalent of less than .1 FTE. Because ASTI efforts are in alignment with existing staff duties as directed by the County, it is not anticipated that new funding would need to be allocated. It is anticipated that staffing cost associated with County efforts will be offset by having ASTI Program Managers, technical assistance and tools provided to the County free of charge.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to forward two (2) copies of the certified minute order to Heather Allen in the Planning and Development Department, and Roy Hapeman in the General Services Department.

**Attachments:**

1. ASTI Municipal Agency Participation Form
2. ASTI Fact Sheet
3. CEQA Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

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