

I-REN Executive Committee

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the I-REN Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Crystal Ruiz at 2:00 p.m. on January 17, 2023, at the Rialto Civic Center, City Council Board Chambers, 150 S. Palm Avenue, Rialto, CA.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee member Oscar Ortiz led the Committee members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

- CVAG:
 - City of Indio - Oscar Ortiz
- SBCOG:
 - City of Rialto - Deborah Robertson
 - County of San Bernardino - Curt Hagman
 - Town of Apple Valley - Art Bishop
- WRCOG:
 - City of Corona - Jacque Casillas
 - City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas
 - City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. AB 361 FINDINGS

A. Assembly Bill 361 Findings

Action:

1. Affirmed the findings of the I-REN Executive Committee in Resolution Number 01-22; adopted on December 13, 2022, which are:
 - a. The Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency on March 4, 2020, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which State of Emergency continues to exist today, and
 - b. State or local officials have recommended measures to promote social distancing.

B. Summary Minutes from the December 13, 2022, Executive Committee Meeting

Action:

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the December 13, 2022, Executive Committee meeting.

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

MOVER: Bishop

SECONDER: Barajas

AYES: Ortiz, Robertson, Hagman, Bishop, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz

6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. Recap of Regulatory and Policy History of I-REN's Formation

Dr. Kurt Wilson, WRCOG Executive Director, reported that the concept of RENs has been around for a while. Conceptual discussions of I-REN began in 2017 with a number of individuals from each partner Council of Government (COG) met to discuss the possibility of creating the I-REN in order to attract local resources to this region - member COGs include the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG), and the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG). There are also two Program Administrators - SoCal Gas and Southern California Edison (SCE). The I-REN Business Plan was approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on November 18, 2021.

The following agreements between all parties were prepared:

1. Cost Sharing Cooperative Agreement - an agreement to pay for the consultants to develop the Business Plan.
2. Business Plan - formal proposal to the CPUC to become a Program Administrator / Regional Energy Network.
3. Joint Cooperation Memo - Regulatory requirement from the CPUC to capture how IL-REN, SoCal REN, SCE, and SoCal Gas will work together.
4. Memorandum of Agreement - delegates duties and responsibilities between CVAG, SBCOG, and WRCOG.
5. Governance and Operation Rules - Defines roles, responsibilities, and scopes of authority of CVAG, SBCOG, and WRCOG, establishes communication and decision-making channels, and delineates scopes of authority of each member COG.
6. Programs Agreement - Establishes mechanisms for I-REN to access funds through specified process, and establishes SoCal Gas as the Fiscal Agency and WRCOG as the Administrative Lead.

Committee member Curt Hagman expressed concerns as it relates to voting representation size of each COG and even / balanced funding amongst each COG.

Committee member Art Bishop indicated that he is excited to see I-REN grow.

Committee member Oscar Ortiz would like a more detailed review of revenues / population funding as it relates to his jurisdiction.

Committee member Jacque Casillas indicated that having a better understanding of what each subregion contributes and uses will help to define where I-REN is headed.

Committee member Chris Barajas indicated that he would like to see programs created that are open to all cities / jurisdictions, and it is the responsibility of each city / jurisdiction to secure funding for programs in their areas.

Committee member Hagman wants to ensure that all member COGs have the same fair opportunity to take care of their respective areas / constituents.

Committee member Deborah Robertson indicated that under I-REN, this region will be able to maximize efforts for resources.

Chair Ruiz indicated that all of the equality and passion of programs each member has expressed as a desire for their respective communities / districts will be obtained under the upcoming Strategic Plan and she is excited to see what the group comes up with, together.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

B. I-REN Business Plan Overview

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, reported that today's presentation will be provided by Frontier Energy and Blue Point Planning.

Margaret Marchant of Frontier Energy provided an overview on the Business Plan timeline. There were 34 letters of support that were submitted within the Business Plan to the CPUC. The CPUC's governance requirements for new RENs include having at least two local government entities within its governance structure. REN programs must either fill gaps in offerings by other Program Administrators, pilot innovative activities that could be expanded statewide, or serve hard to reach communities.

Ms. Marchant provided an overview of the differences in governance structure among SoCalREN, BayREN, and 3C-REN.

Committee member Curt Hagman asked how the other RENs are dealing with the division of resources.

Ms. Marchant responded that there are metrics used which are mandated by the CPUC, and RENs can also develop their own metrics.

RENs are mission driven to serve their constituents / communities. REN performance is measured by the progress toward goals, metrics, and targets. If goals are not met, future funding could be impacted.

Committee member Art Bishop asked if the future funding that could potentially be impacted for not meeting goals is annual funding, or 5-year funding.

Ms. Marchant responded that because I-REN applied for funding outside of the normal portfolio filing cycle, it is already approved for funding on an annual basis through the year 2027.

Committee member Bishop asked if staff are responsible for filing reports with the CPUC.

Mr. Dailey responded that as the lead administrator, WRCOG is responsible for filing reports with the CUPC. This Committee will have the opportunity to review and approve the reports prior to submittal to the CPUC.

Ms. Marchant continued with the mission, vision, and goals & strategies of I-REN. I-REN's mission is, "To actively participate in California's Clean Energy initiatives and build a stronger clean energy economy and community." I-REN's vision is to "connect residents, businesses, and local government to a wide range of energy efficiency resources to increase energy savings and equitable access throughout San Bernardino and Riverside Counties."

The Business Plan goals include the following:

1. Goal 1 - Build capacity and knowledge to enable local governments to effectively leverage energy efficiency services and to demonstrate best practices (Public Sector).
2. Goal 2 - Ensure there is a trained workforce to support and realize energy efficiency savings goals across sectors (Workforce, Education & Training Sector).
3. Goal 3 - Work closely with local building departments and the building industry to support, train, and enable long-term streamlining of energy code compliance (Codes and Standards Sector).

Goal 1 programs include a Technical Assistance and Strategic Energy Planning Program and a Public Buildings Normalized Metered Energy Consumption (NMEC) Program.

Committee member Hagman asked how much is subjective policy proposed by staff versus how much is required by the CPUC?

Ms. Marchant responded that the Business Plan, the budget, and strategic framework is what the CPUC has approved to spend funding on. There is flexibility, within reason, across the Programs.

Chair Ruiz indicated that these matters will be discussed in the Strategic Planning sessions.

Committee member Hagmans asked which consultants have been hired to date.

Mr. Dailey responded that Frontier Energy and subconsultant Blue Point Planning have been hired to support the launch and implementation of I-REN at a staffing level.

Ms. Marchant continued that the strategies and tactics for all goals were developed based on specific barriers cited by local jurisdictions and stakeholders.

I-REN's portfolio budget was prepared in a bottom-up process, meaning each function was analyzed for its needs and costs, and then justified against expenses for each year.

Committee member Bishop asked if the currently awarded funding will change every five years.

Ms. Marchant responded that at the end of the funding period, 2027, and when I-REN reapplies for additional funding, I-REN can apply for more money and even more market sectors. As stated earlier, future funding will be impacted if progress and goals are not exhibited and met.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

C. I-REN Strategic Plan Introduction

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, reported that the Business Plan is the "what" and the Strategic Plan is the "how."

Mindy Craig of Blue Point Planning reported that ongoing meetings with staff from each COG are occurring. Surveys will be released in the near future to all members and stakeholders as well to obtain information on what is needed, wanted, desired, etc., as it relates to projects. Meetings with each Committee member will also be scheduled to gather information on what the situation is today.

Because the three COGs are coming together as a region, I-REN will be able to co-create programs, policies, partnerships, and relationships across the region, which will enable I-REN to get projects out and on the ground much better than if each COG were to attempt this on its own. There may even be opportunities to create pilot projects / programs.

A draft Strategic Plan will be presented to this Committee likely in July 2023. The expected outcomes include:

1. 3-year Plan that includes measurable goals, strategies to ensure effective and efficient use of CPUC funding
2. Identification of priorities and partners
3. Integration of equity
4. Alignment of engagement and activities across members of I-REN

Ms. Craig asked each Committee member to briefly indicate what success means to them.

Committee member Chris Barajas indicated that success to him means getting this program up and running, creating a Strategic Plan that all participants benefit from as equally as possible, and giving the residents back the money that they put in (via the Public Goods charge on their utility bills), and creating beneficial programs.

Committee member Curt Hagman indicated that success to him means to be cognizant of the current environment, to train a workforce and get them deployed, to have the expertise to help member jurisdictions efficiently spend funding for projects that may currently be on the table, and to earn an A+ on I-REN's credit rating.

Committee member Art Bishop asked if I-REN has the ability to form a non-profit and seek funding from other agencies?

Ms. Craig responded that I-REN does have that ability. The CPUC would like to see I-REN leveraging, for example, funding from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Committee member Oscar Ortiz indicated that success to him would be for I-REN to make a big push into renewable energy throughout all communities, and finding a way to create savings for not only

residents, but local governments and their partners. Lastly, to priorities communities which are most in need of assistance for climate resiliency projects.

Committee member Jacque Casillas indicated that success to her would include being effective, efficient, under promising and over delivering, not setting sights too far ahead, and making sure I-REN is getting the buy-in from cities. Also, that I-REN has used up every single dollar it has been awarded, and have projects in the queue.

Chair Ruiz indicated that success to her would include buy-in from all cities and districts, and stakeholder participation.

Ms. Craig asked if there is anything in particular this Committee wants to see in the Strategic Plan.

Chair Ruiz responded that she wants to see answers to the surveys.

Committee member Casillas responded that she wants to see examples of what other RENs have done and what the end of the cycle looked like for them.

Chair Ruiz would also like to see where the holes are and how can I-REN avoid them.

Committee member Ortiz responded that he wants to see history of other projects and financial projects moving forward.

Committee member Bishop responded that he wants to see survey results.

Margaret Marchant of Frontier Energy stated that the energy efficiency funding cannot be used for renewables according to current CPUC guidelines.

Action:

1. Authorized the initiation of the I-REN Organizational Strategic Plan.

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

MOVER: Hagman

SECONDER: Casillas

AYES: Ortiz, Hagman, Bishop, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz

D. Approval of I-REN Executive Committee 2023 Meeting Schedule

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, reported that a meeting schedule was initially presented in December 2022; however, the dates proposed did not work for the group.

The Committee discussed the proposed dates and chose the 3rd Tuesday of the month every month at 2:00 p.m. with the option of cancelling any meeting if need be. Additionally, meeting locations will alternate amongst member jurisdictions.

Action:

1. Approved the schedule of I-REN Executive Committee meetings for 2023.

RESULT: APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

MOVER: Bishop

SECONDER: Hagman

AYES: Ortiz, Hagman, Bishop, Casillas, Barajas, Ruiz

E. I-REN Assistance with Additional Funding Opportunities

Kenyon Potter, CVAG Director of Energy & Sustainability, reported that there are a number of state and federal programs that have funding available. I-REN is in the position to be able to provide technical assistance to member jurisdictions' energy efficiency projects such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure and climate adaption and resiliency, for example. One of the questions that should be included in the survey that was mentioned earlier should be if a jurisdiction needs assistance, to let us know now, as some applications close in March 2023.

I-REN is already working on a grant to extend what is known as solar plus, to add heat pumps and other elements so a contractor can go online and get a permit.

Committee member Curt Hagman asked how to coordinate this type of work, which entity does it?

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, responded that Coordinating Committees and Working Groups were part of the Business Plan, and I-REN could also rely on the committee structures within each COG to bring communities into the conversation.

Committee member Jacque Casillas indicated that she really likes the idea of using bodies that already exist.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Ruiz asked Committee members to submit their contact information to staff, who can create and share the list with all Committee members. Chair Ruiz would also like a color copy of the Business Plan.

8. UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

- Consideration of Professional Service Agreements for Development and Implementation of I-REN Programs

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no requests for future agenda items.

10. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no general announcements.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next I-REN Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2023, on the Zoom platform with the option for Committee members to attend in-person.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.