



## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

Promoting the wise use of land – Helping to build great communities

**Date:** October 7, 2013  
**To:** Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board  
**From:** James Caruso; Department of Planning and Building  
**Subject:** Renewable Energy Streamlining Program (RESP)

The County has been awarded a grant from the California Energy Commission (CEC) to fund a Renewable Energy Streamlining Program. The Program will seek to revise County policy documents and ordinances to encourage and streamline renewable energy development (wind and solar) in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The Program is divided into several tasks:

- Renewable energy resource mapping
- Stakeholder outreach
- Policy/ordinance preparation
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Public Hearings

The proposed program will define “tiers” of renewable energy development by site size or turbine capacities. For example, solar power facilities are identified by size as Tier 1 through Tier 4. Tier 4 consists of large utility scale facilities such as those under construction in the eastern county. Tier 1 refers to small individual rooftop facilities. The ordinance will address Tiers 2 and 3.

As so much of the rural area of the county is designated Agriculture, the program will effect ag lands. Solar facility sites up to perhaps 100 acres in size could be a focus of the streamlining program. Streamlining will consist of revising levels of permits (discretionary vs. ministerial), development of performance standards (certainty), and preparation of a master environmental document for use by future renewable energy projects.

Staff will return to ALAB during the 18 month program time frame for status reports, review of findings and with draft ordinance and policy language. ALAB will also be on the interested parties list for Notice of Preparation and Draft EIR comment periods.

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