



California Energy Commission

Opt-In Certification Program Overview – Pre-Filing Meeting
Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division



AGENDA

- CEC Jurisdiction
- Opt-In Certification Program
 - Intent
 - Eligible Facilities
 - Agency Coordination
 - Process Outline and Milestones
 - Required CEC Findings
- Reimbursement of Local Agencies
- Applicant Administrative Requirements



CEC Jurisdictional Overview

- Exclusive permitting authority over thermal power plants 50 MW and larger
- Condensed optional permitting authority for eligible clean energy facilities
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency for facilities seeking certification or exemption
- Certification processes include engineering evaluations, and compliance with local and state laws assessments.





Types of Applications

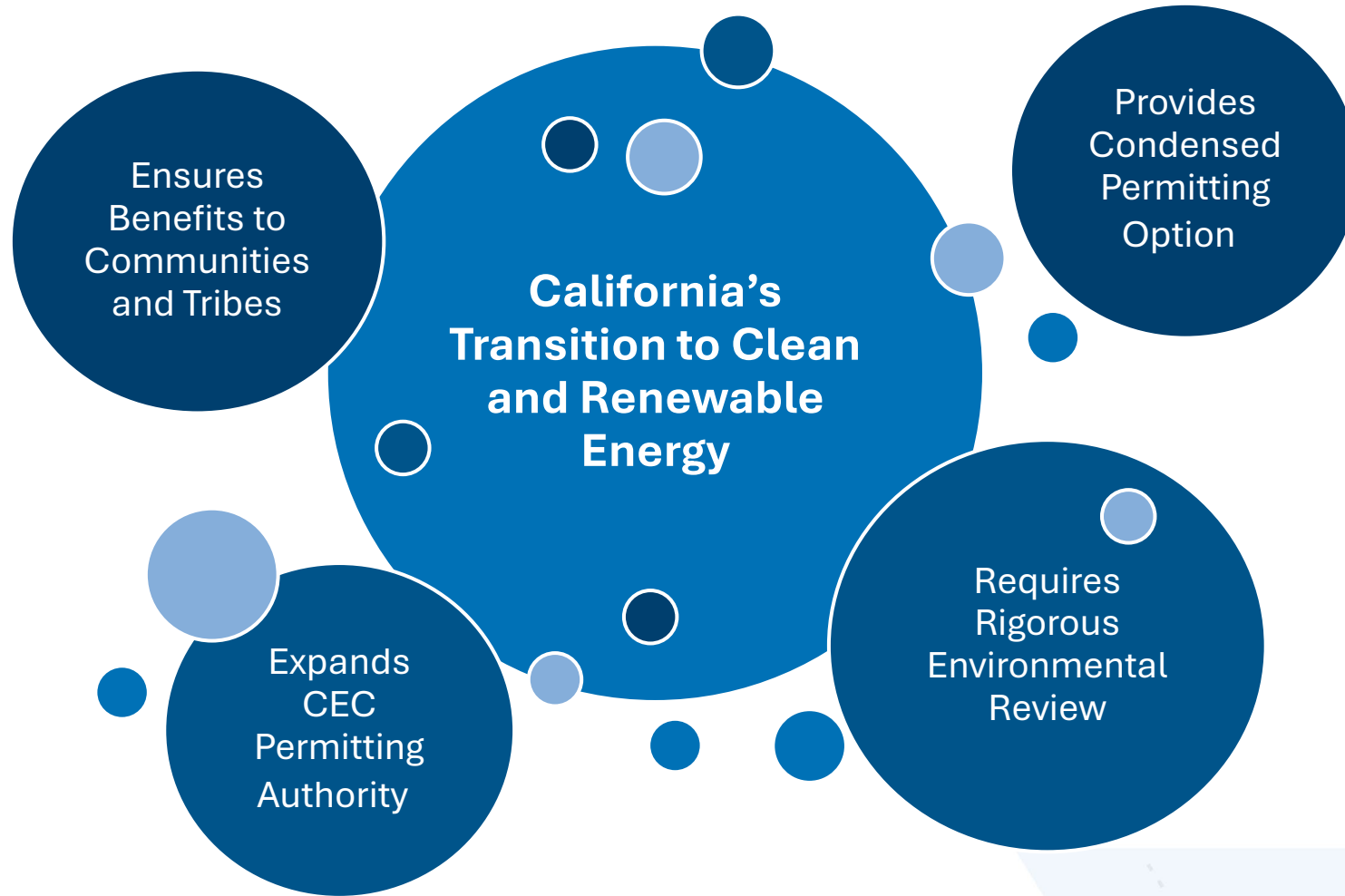
- **Application for Certification (AFC)**
- **Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE)**
- **Opt-In Certification (Opt-In)**



Opt-In Certification Program



Opt-In Certification Intent





Opt-In Certification Program

- Optional, not mandatory, to file with the CEC
- No evidentiary proceeding
- 270-day period to reach a decision
- Partial in lieu authority
- Not a certified regulatory program but CEQA-plus:
 - ✓ Community benefits agreement
 - ✓ Labor and prevailing wage requirements
- In effect until June 30, 2030

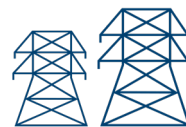




Opt-In Certification Program Eligible Facilities



Solar photovoltaic or terrestrial wind electrical generating power plants 50 megawatts (MW) or greater



Certain transmission lines associated with these generating and storage facilities



Energy storage systems capable of storing 200 megawatt-hours (MWh) or more



Specified facilities that manufacture or assemble clean energy or storage technologies or related components



Stationary power plants using any source of thermal energy, excluding fossil or nuclear fuels, 50 MW or greater, and geothermal of any size



Hydrogen production facilities (not derived from fossil fuel feedstock) and associated onsite storage and processing facilities



Agency Coordination



Source: CDFW



Source: State Water Board



Source: DTSC



Opt-In Process Outline

Pre-Filing Meeting

- 30 days prior to filing application
- Project docket established
- Fees submitted with application

Data Completeness Review

- 30 days to conduct application completeness review
- Missing information can be requested
- 45 days to review supplemental info and make any further requests
- Notice and application shared with local government, other public agencies, and tribes
- Deem application complete

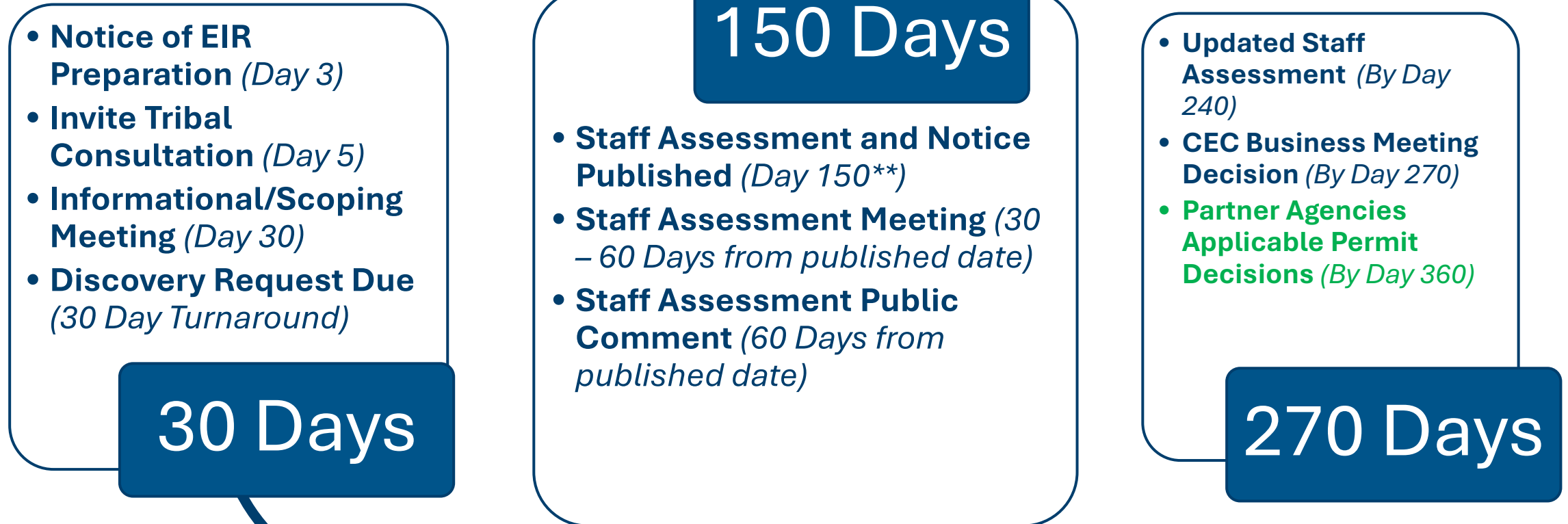
Environmental Review

- 270 days to conduct environmental review and bring staff recommendation to a CEC Business Meeting
- Additional information can be requested
- 30 days for applicant to provide the information



270 Day Process Milestones

***These Deadlines are subject to any substantial changes made to the project or certain other events occurring after an application is deemed complete.*





CEC-Specific Requirements for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

- CEC staff will:
 - Evaluate projects against new BESS safety standards
 - Require the project owner to follow the latest version of NFPA 855 for the construction, commissioning, and operation of the BESS regardless of the final battery supplier
 - Require additional administrative and engineering controls to prevent or respond to a fire from the BESS





Fire Consultation Requirement for BESS

Public Resources Code section 25545.19

Applicant shall certify that at least 30 days before submitting the application, the applicant:

- Met and conferred with the authority that has jurisdiction over fire suppression in the area
- Sought input on mitigating potential fire and life safety concerns
- Sought input on the content of emergency action plans

Application shall include:

- Documentation of consultation, including date, participant names and titles
- A summary of matters discussed
- A description of how the application addresses those matters



CEC Findings Required to Approve Opt-In Projects



Signed community benefits agreement



Net positive economic benefit to the local government that would have had permitting authority (rebuttable presumption)



Commits to paying prevailing wage to skilled and trained workforce



Significant effects of the project will be avoided or mitigated, or statement of overriding considerations for significant effects found infeasible to avoid or mitigate



Reimbursement of Local Agencies

California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1878.1

- Costs eligible for reimbursement
- Costs ineligible for reimbursement
- Procedure for approving reimbursement budgets
- Procedure for approving reimbursement invoices



Licensing and Compliance Fees

Licensing Application Deposit: \$750,000 nonrefundable

When: submitted with application

CEC will invoice the applicant for the CEC's actual costs to process the application if exceeding the \$750,000 deposit.

If CEC decides to issue a license,

First Annual Compliance Fee: \$70,000

When: the date the CEC adopts the final decision

Subsequent Annual Compliance Fee: \$70,000

When: July 1 of each year

Post-Certification Petition Fee: \$5,000 nonrefundable

When: submitted with petition

CEC will invoice the project owner for the CEC's actual costs to process the petition if exceeding the \$5,000 fee.



Meeting Venue Scoping and Arrangements

Request: Applicant supports the process of securing hybrid meeting venues

Roles and Responsibilities

CEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides guidance• Retains oversight• Pays all venue rental and IT-related invoices
Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researches venues• Discusses options with project manager• Books venue after receiving CEC confirmation



Compliance, Monitoring, and Enforcement

- CEQA Project Manager (PM) will introduce Compliance Project Manager (CPM)
- CPM will outline next steps if the CEC decides to issue a license:
 - Compliance and enforcement activities, including Notice to Proceed
 - Delegate Chief Building Official (DCBO) negotiation, contract, and coordination after CEC Decision
 - DCBO will be a separate cost, negotiated with the project owner



Next Steps

- CEC staff will create a project docket and webpage
- Applicant may submit the Opt-In application no earlier than 30 days from today

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Docket Log

Docket: 26-OPT-01
Project Title: Vaca Dixon Power Center Project
Generated On: 3/27/2026 2:25:48 PM

Include: Documents Comments Transcripts

↓ TN #	Docketed Date	Document Title
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California ENERGY COMMISSION

Enter keywords, e.g. Tracking Progress

HOME PROCEEDINGS RULES AND REGULATIONS PROGRAMS AND TOPICS FUNDING DATA AND REPORTS

Home > Programs and Topics > All Topics > Power Plants > Vaca Dixon Power Center Project

Vaca Dixon Power Center Project

PROJECT OWNER Vaca Dixon BESS LLC and Arges BESS LLC	TECHNOLOGY Battery Storage System	ORIGINAL PROCEEDING Submit e-Comment Submit e-Filing Docket Log (26-OPT-01) Exhibit List Proof of Service List Search All Power Plant Documents
DOCKET NUMBER 26-OPT-01	PROJECT STATUS Under Review	
CAPACITY 157 megawatts, 457 megawatt-hours	PROJECT TYPE Opt-In	
LOCATION City of Vacaville, Solano County, California		

Project Description

Vaca Dixon BESS LLC and Arges BESS LLC (applicant) propose to construct and operate the Vaca Dixon Power Center Project (project). The project would be located on an approximately 10-acre site (Assessor's Parcel

CONTACTS



More Information

Power Plant Licensing

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/power-plant-licensing>

Opt-In Certification Program

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program>



Thank you!