August 28, 2026 **Sent via email only**

Chairman Brad Rasmussen
Lake County Board of Supervisors
Lake County Courthouse
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

Dear Chair Rasmussen and Supervisors,

Scotts Valley Advisory Council (SVAC) commends your Board for its direction on July 14, 2026 to your Board's Ad Hoc Energy Policy Development Committee. SVAC and other County residents look forward to seeing the ad hoc committee's first draft of the energy policy, expected 60 days from July 14, 2026. A comprehensive energy policy positions the County to make informed evaluations of proposed energy development projects.

Context for energy policy: why does an energy policy matter for Lake County and Scotts Valley?

SVAC sees connections between climate change, extreme weather events, more frequent and ferocious wildfires— experienced by Scotts Valley residents. A smart energy policy can reduce some of the factors contributing to these hazards plaguing Scotts Valley.

Cleaner energy solutions do not contribute greenhouse gases that lead to warmer temperatures. Warmer temperatures, more water vapor and greenhouse gas emissions are leading to more intense storms with severe flooding. Rains upland from Scotts Valley result in stormwater runoff with tremendous soil erosion loads[1]. Flooding and soil erosion issues that affect Scotts Valley and recommendations will be covered in another SVAC letter to your Board.

SVAC favors energy projects that do not rely on carbon combustion, a climate change factor. Examples of cleaner energy projects include solar, wind, pump hydro, hydrogen, and geothermal.

SVAC understands that energy policy has an environmental impact on wildlife.

Energy policy – key to farmer success and economic survival

For an agricultural county, **energy policy** is **key** to a **farmer's success** and **economic survival**. For some Scotts Valley crops (grapes, pears, walnuts), frost protection is required.

[1] Steele, Jim. "Window on the Lake: How to fix the Lake," Part 4, Lake County Record-Bee (2026).

If outdoor vegetable production were to return to Scotts Valley, frost protection with sprinklers will be needed.

Electrical supply must be able to meet tremendous agricultural demand during the night for frost protection. Energy and water distributed by sprinklers make frost protection[2] possible. Sprinklers need to start before freezing temperatures begin, sometimes at fairly high temperatures depending on relative humidities, and run until air temperature is above 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

Renewable energy sources will need to be able to meet that demand or have adequate battery storage. The survival of economic agriculture is essential to the future of Scotts Valley.

Energy policy: consumer benefits – energy independence (demand side)

For energy consumers, demand-side actions promoting energy independence can result in affordable energy (reduced energy costs) and increased resilience. Energy independence measures can include microgrids and residents owning power systems and battery banks. This gives residents more independence from utility control and utility-declared preemptive power outages to prevent wildfire.

Some of the measures to achieve energy independence call for renewable energy solutions. This, in turn, reduces demand for polluting energy sources and their contribution to climate change and extreme weather.

The County can play a significant role in this effort by

- establishing a one-stop energy office that helps residents, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations access solar, battery, weatherization, and state and federal incentives through third-party financing, bulk purchasing, and streamlined permitting.
    - The energy office does not incur County debt nor utility risk. It consists of one or two dedicated employees whose position is funded, ideally by grants.
    - The County can bulk-buy solar power parts and components, realizing 10-20% reduction in installed costs. There is an option for expansion into negotiated equipment pricing.
    - Make solar power available without money-down. Property-Assessed Clean Energy (PACE/C-PACE) requires no County lending. It is authorized by simple resolution using state-licensed administrators. Financing is available for solar,

[2] Some nights can require 10 hours or more of frost protection. Typically, 50 gallons per minute per acre is required with some growers preferring 75 gallons per minute. Nighttime peak demand for electricity for frost protection can be large.

storage, efficiency and wildfire hardening. It is repaid on the resident's property tax bill.

- SGIP (Self-Generation Incentive Program) Equity and Battery Access, with Bridge Funding. California may still offer SGIP rebates, that can cover almost the full cost of batteries for fire-zone, PSPS-impacted, low-income, and medical-baseline customers. California also offers short-term bridge funding, so upfront cost is not an obstacle. Current availability of these resources must be confirmed.
- Microgrids at Resiliency Centers. When a resiliency center has a microgrid (solar plus battery storage), it is better able to retain power during outages. Facilities that function as resiliency centers can include fire stations, shelters, and water systems.

Energy policy: energy generation (supply-side)

For an energy generation or capacity (supply-side) energy policy, SVAC recommends these points:

- Promote energy policy best practices for energy generation / capacity.
- Build-in self-reliance and self-governance.
- Confer with energy industry subject matter experts with executive-level experience in the County to develop the energy policy.
- Focus on Lake County retaining as much control as possible over its own energy sources, regardless of what entity operates the production site.
- Be comprehensive, so it provides guidance regardless of power source (e.g. geothermal, hydrogen, pumped storage hydropower).
- Explore feasibility of Lake County regulating and perhaps owning its own energy resources.
- Incorporate transparency and public outreach.
- Consider energy needs for the economic future of local agriculture.
- Seek tribal involvement.
- Make low-cost energy availability to County residents, businesses and organizations as an objective[3].

[3] One way to achieve this objective is through a Joint Powers Agreement between the County and another entity or entities to give Lake County residents and businesses the first right of refusal to energy produced in the County.

- Include revenue participation[4] and community benefits for Lake County.
- Maximize royalty revenue[5].
- Call for environmental monitoring.
- Protect groundwater and drinking water.
- Define enforceable safety standards.
- Define infrastructure protections
- Include emergency response and wildfire planning
- Explore feasibility of the County becoming an energy producer or broker.
- Define development agreement terms.
- Establish protections for County resources in part by adopting ordinances.

SVAC appreciates your Board's attention to important issues affecting the lives and future of residents. Energy affects quality of life, economic development and life for those dependent on medical devices and all who need protection from extreme temperatures. SVAC hopes that its recommendations help clarify objectives for the County's comprehensive energy policy. SVAC believes that your Board's authorizing the addition of an Energy Element as part of the General Plan update is a positive step. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chair Jody Altic, Scotts Valley Advisory Council
Secretary Jared Hendricks, Scotts Valley Advisory Council
Member at-Large Joel Coble, Scotts Valley Advisory Council
Member at-Large Cornelia Sieber-Davis, Scotts Valley Advisory Council

c: Lake County Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Energy Policy Development Committee
Lake County Planning Commission
General Plan Advisory Committee
Community Development Dept. Director Mireya Turner

[4] For example, "a sovereign wealth fund [SWF] is a state-owned investment fund that governments use to invest surplus revenues and other financial reserves. These funds are typically funded by profits from the sale of commodities [e.g. energy]…" [Schepp, David. "Sovereign wealth funds: How nations invest for the future," Britannica Money. Link: https://www.britannica.com/money/sovereign-wealth-fund] Other revenue options include franchising and excise taxes.

[5] Royalty revenue could require an energy producer to pay a fee based on percentage of kilowatts generated from Lake County energy sources.