

IMPERIAL COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning / Building & Safety / Parks & Recreation



For Immediate Release

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COUNTY SEEKS A BALANCE BETWEEN AGRICULTURE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

INITIAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014.

March 6, 2014, El Centro, CA - What will it take for the County of Imperial to become a leader in the generation of renewable energy? That is the question that County officials, planners, and the public will be asking themselves over the next few months as the County begins to update the Geothermal/Alternative Energy and Transmission Element of its General Plan. The last update was conducted in 2006.

The General Plan is the blueprint that guides development over the next two decades. The County possesses a unique diversity of renewable energy resources in addition to some of the richest, most productive agricultural land in California. Updating the General Plan will allow the County to further its goals to sustain agriculture, improve the environment, and reap the economic opportunities created by the generation and transmission of renewable energy.

The County of Imperial received funding from the California Energy Commission's *Renewable Energy and Conservation Planning Grant*, which will be used to conduct the Update.

Some of the challenges that the project team will face include:

- **Mapping** the locations where existing renewable energy resources and where the conditions are favorable for generating renewable energy.
- **Identifying** the most suitable areas for renewable energy projects that ensure that valuable farmland and sensitive habitats are not disturbed.
- **Targeting** areas around or under the Salton Sea for renewable energy development and/or habitat conservation.
- **Defining** appropriate transmission corridors.
- **Protecting** areas containing important biological, cultural and natural resources.

The 14-month process will benefit from a robust and transparent public engagement program. This is your project and your future. Public input will be critical to the success of the project. Along with an ad hoc Technical Advisory Group that will represent a wide range of interests and expertise, there will be three sets of interactive community workshops. The public is encouraged to attend.

The first set of community meetings will be held on Thursday, March 27, 2014 at the following times and locations.

- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. at the Lion's Recreation Center, 225 A Street, Brawley, CA 92227
- 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the County of Imperial Administrative Center, Board Chambers, 940 Main Street, El Centro, CA 92243.

Please attend the community meeting that is most convenient, as the content and format will be identical.

For more information, contact Andy Horne, County of Imperial, Deputy County Executive Officer, at 760.482.4727, or andyhorne@co.imperial.ca.us, or visit the project website at www.icpds.com (CEC ALTERNATIVE ENERGY UPDATE).