



**DESERT COMMUNITY ENERGY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

**Monday, April 13th, 2026
3:00 p.m.**

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Large Conference Room
74199 El Paseo Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260**

Members of the public are encouraged to submit comments in connection with the Desert Community Energy Community Advisory Committee meeting by email to: cvag@cvag.org by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the CAC meeting.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Noel Loughrin, City of Palm Springs
Roll Call P3

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**
This is the first of two opportunities to address the Committee. Any person wishing to address the Desert Community Energy Community Advisory Committee on items appearing on this agenda may do so at this time. Please limit comments to 3 minutes. At the discretion of the chair, additional public comment time and/or opportunities during the meeting may be granted.

3. **STAFF COMMENTS**

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**
 - A. **Approve the meeting minutes from January 15, 2026** P4

5. **DISCUSSION / ACTION**
 - A. **I-REN’s New Incentive Finder – Eman Nazir** P6
 - B. **Calpine Community Energy’s Community Benefits Grant Program – Lisa McNeilly** P7
 - C. **Update on DCE’s New Customer Energy Efficiency Program – Eman Nazir** P8

6. **INFORMATION**
 - A. **Discussion Topics Schedule** P9
 - B. **UCLA CARB Study – Zero-Emission Equipment in Non-Residential Buildings** P10

7. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**
Any CAC member wishing to share comments may do so at this time.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**
This is the second of two opportunities to address the Committee. Any person wishing to address the Committee on items not appearing on this agenda may do so at this time. Please limit comments to 2 minutes. At the discretion of the chair, additional public comment time and/or opportunities during the meeting may be granted

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The next meeting of the **Desert Community Energy Board** will be held on May 18, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Large Conference Room at Palm Springs City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, 92262.

The next **DCE Community Advisory Committee** meeting will be determined at a future date.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**



DESERT COMMUNITY ENERGY COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Voting Members	City
Noel Loughrin, CAC CHAIR	Palm Springs
Donald Barrett, CAC VICE CHAIR	Palm Springs
Berlinda Blackburn	Palm Desert
Paul Murphy	Palm Desert
Bernard Rottner	Palm Springs
Donald Zeigler	Palm Desert

ITEM 4A

Desert Community Energy
Community Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2026



1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the DCE Community Advisory Committee was called to order by DCE Staff member Savannah Gil at 4:04 PM at the Burke Rix Communications Conference Room, 431 South Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 206, Palm Springs, CA 92262.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Don Barrett
Berlinda Blackburn
Paul Murphy
Bernard Rottner

City of Residency

Palm Springs
Palm Desert
Palm Desert
Palm Springs

Members Absent

Donald Zeigler*
Noel Loughrin

City of Residency

Palm Desert
Palm Springs

**member joined virtually as a viewer, but did was marked absent for voting purposes*

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

4. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Gil shared that the Ralph M. Brown Act has been updated and a URL link was linked in the agenda.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approve the meeting minutes from June 9, 2025

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. MURPHY AND SECONDED BY MS. BLACKBURN TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES.

THE MOTIONS CARRIED WITH 4 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Barrett	Aye
Berlinda Blackburn	Aye
Noel Loughrin	Absent
Paul Murphy	Aye
Bernard Rottner	Aye
Donald Zeigler	Absent

6. DISCUSSION/ACTION

A. Election of Community Advisory Committee Officers

Ms. Blackburn nominated Noel Loughrin for Chair. No other nominations for Chair were received

A nomination for Donald Barrett for Vice Chair was received. No other nominations were received.

IT WAS MOVED BY THE DCE CAC COMMITTEE TO APPOINT NOEL LOUGHRIN, RESIDENT OF PALM SPRINGS, AS CHAIR OF THE DCE CAC, AND DONALD BARRETT, RESIDENT OF PALM DESERT, AS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE DCE CAC.

THE NOMINATIONS CARRIED WITH 4 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT

Don Barrett	Aye
Berlinda Blackburn	Aye
Noel Loughrin	Absent
Paul Murphy	Aye
Bernard Rottner	Aye
Donald Zeigler	Absent

B. DCE’s New Customer Energy Efficiency Program

Director of Energy & Sustainability Lisa McNeilly presented item 6B to the Committee.

Member discussion ensued with Mrs. McNeilly answering questions from the committee members, who also shared their feedback on the program and provided ideas on which small business sectors to reach out to about the program.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Desert Community Energy Board** will be held on February 9, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Large Conference Room at Palm Springs City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, 92262.

The next **DCE Community Advisory Committee** meeting will be held on March 9, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. in Palm Desert.

(UPDATE: Both the DCE Board and DCE CAC meetings announced above were canceled. The DCE Board will hold a special meeting on March 23, 2026).

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, DCE Staff member Savannah Gil adjourned the meeting, and all members agreed by consensus, at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Savannah Gil
Program Specialist III – Energy & Sustainability*

ITEM 5A

Desert Community Energy
Community Advisory Committee
April 13, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: The Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) Incentive Finder

Contact: Eman Nazir, Management Analyst (enazir@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: The Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) is a collaborative of local governments in Riverside and San Bernardino counties working to expand access to energy efficiency resources, education, and funding across the Inland Empire. I-REN is comprised of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG), and Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG).

In Spring 2026, I-REN, in coordination with CVAG staff, is preparing to launch the region's first residential Incentive Finder tool. On January 20, 2026, the I-REN Executive Committee approved the execution of a Professional Services Agreement between WRCOG and Paulo Analysis for the development and implementation of the Incentive Finder. The Incentive Finder consolidates more than 160 federal, state, regional, and local programs into a single platform, allowing residents to quickly identify opportunities to reduce energy costs and invest in their homes.

By entering basic location and household information, users can view programs they may be eligible for, including:

- Energy bill discounts and income-qualified assistance
- Home energy improvements such as solar, battery storage, and insulation
- Electrification upgrades, including heat pump systems
- Clean transportation options, including electric vehicles

The tool also highlights enhanced benefits for income-eligible households and includes relevant local programs. No personally identifiable information is required or stored, and results can be emailed for easy access.

Staff will provide a brief demonstration of the Incentive Finder and share an update on its upcoming launch. CAC members will be invited to participate in a beta testing exercise during the meeting and provide feedback on usability, clarity, and overall experience to help inform final refinements prior to public release.

ITEM 5B

Desert Community Energy Board
Community Advisory Committee
April 13, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Update on Calpine Community Energy’s Community Benefits Grant Program

Contact: Lisa McNeilly, Director of Energy & Sustainability (lmcneilly@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: Calpine Community Energy (Calpine) provides front-line customer services for DCE. The relationship dates back to February 2018, when the DCE Board authorized a contract with Calpine to provide data management and customer call center services through February 26, 2025. On May 19, 2025, the Board approved an agreement with Calpine Community Energy to provide data management and customer call center services through April 2028.

In addition to the continuation of existing services, the new contract establishes a community benefits grants program for the DCE service territory. For this program, Calpine rebates two percent of the annual data management service fees directly to local non-profit organizations that help advance clean energy, sustainability, and resiliency in support of DCE’s mission. At the September 2025 DCE Board meeting, Calpine shared preliminary information about the community benefits grant program and gathered the Board’s input on how to coordinate these efforts with the City of Palm Springs’ other community engagement efforts. In March 2026, staff shared an update with the Board about the anticipated launch of the program in May 2026.

Eligible organizations must be IRS-designated 501(c)3 nonprofit(s) in the DCE service territory, with a local or regional focus, and applications should align with one or more focus areas (environmental and social justice communities research, education, and/or workforce development). Calpine will collaborate with DCE staff on the grant guidelines, on promotion of the program, and on the evaluation of applications, but has sole responsibility for awarding the funds. With approximately \$11,000 in available funding for 2026, DCE expects to award one to three grants, which will have a one-year term. Applications will be relatively simple and include a short description of the proposed work and a high-level budget.

DCE staff will be creating a dedicated grant webpage and send an informational email to Palm Springs-based 501(c)(3) organizations using publicly available sources to compile the distribution list. The application period should be open for at least six weeks, with grant awardees notified in late summer or early fall.

ITEM 5C

Desert Community Energy
Community Advisory Committee
April 13, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: DCE's New Customer Energy Efficiency Program

Contact: Eman Nazir, Management Analyst (enazir@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: Desert Community Energy (DCE) has submitted an application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to receive funding through the Elect-to-Administer (ETA) framework, which would allow DCE to implement its first customer-facing energy efficiency program.

As previously presented to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) in January 2026, the proposed program includes a Small Business Direct Install pilot offering no-cost energy efficiency upgrades, along with targeted outreach to increase participation among local businesses.

The ETA application remains under CPUC review, and staff continue to prepare for potential program implementation.

Staff is seeking additional CAC input to help refine outreach strategies and identify effective ways to reach small businesses, including trusted messengers, partnership opportunities, and potential barriers to participation.

**DESERT COMMUNITY ENERGY
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Proposed Discussion Topics Schedule - 2026**



Meeting Date	Discussion Topic	Note:
<i>1/27/2025</i>	DCE Consultant Presentation: TEA	Completed
<i>4/2/2025</i>	DCE Consultant Presentation: BRC	Completed
<i>6/9/2025</i>	Extreme Summer Heat	Completed
<i>8/11/2025</i>	CANCELED	Topic moved to January 2026
<i>January 2026</i>	Community Investment: Customer Programs	
<i>March 2026</i>	CANCELED	Topic moved to Jul/Aug 2026
<i>April 2026</i>	DCE Staff Presentations, CAC Feedback	
<i>May/June 2026</i>	Current CCA Landscape and Best Practices	
<i>Jul/Aug 2026</i>	DCE Billing Explained	
<i>Sep/Oct 2026</i>	Outreach Engagement: Marketing Messaging	
<i>Nov/Dec 2026</i>	Data Transparency (Customer Enrollment)	

ITEM 6B

Desert Community Energy
Community Advisory Committee
April 13, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: UCLA CARB Study – Zero-Emission Equipment in Non-Residential Buildings

Contact: Eman Nazir, Management Analyst (enazir@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: The California Center for Sustainable Communities (CCSC) at UCLA, in partnership with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), is conducting a statewide study on retrofit needs for installing zero-emission equipment in existing commercial and non-residential buildings.

The study is seeking input from professionals with experience in electrification or related upgrades (electrical, mechanical, plumbing, permitting, or inspection) across building types such as offices, warehouses, healthcare facilities, retail, schools, and multifamily properties.

Participation may include completing a short survey, submitting optional project documentation, and/or joining a focus group. Participants are eligible for compensation.

This study will help inform future state policies and programs supporting building decarbonization efforts. More information is available on the [study website](#).