

For Immediate Release
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New survey reveals that a majority of Valley residents want clean, local electricity, and a choice in service providers

Clean Power Exchange, a program of the Center for Climate Protection, released new survey results about local and renewable energy. According to the survey, electric utility ratepayers in the San Joaquin Valley – from San Joaquin County to Tulare County – are interested in alternatives to the current energy system.

A majority of ratepayers want a choice regarding their electricity service, and they want electricity generated locally with revenues reinvested into the local economy. They also recognize the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and believe that it is important that their electricity come from clean sources. A supermajority also indicates they are willing to pay something more for electricity generated from cleaner sources.

“Energy is a lot like water in that it is a resource upon which our lives and economies are built,” said Mike Dozier, Executive Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development at Fresno State. “People in the San Joaquin Valley understand that we need to make some real changes to ensure a sustainable future-both economically and environmentally. There’s no better time to explore that here than now,” he said.

Ratepayers across the state have been watching their cost of electricity steadily rise for over thirty years, increasing at a rate of about 4% per year. Meanwhile, state legislators are ramping up requirements to slash greenhouse gas emissions and increase the state’s portfolio of renewable energy sources.

“We conducted this survey in the San Joaquin Valley to find out what ratepayers are thinking as the energy landscape changes so rapidly,” said Ann Hancock, Executive Director of the Center for Climate Protection, the non-profit organization that manages Clean Power Exchange. “We were pleased that folks in California’s heartland are similar to people throughout the state, meaning concerned about climate change and very interested in local solutions to lower emissions.”

	San Joaquin County	Fresno County	Tulare County	Stockton	Fresno	Visalia	Combined
Important for electricity to come from clean sources	72%	69%	71%	72%	75%	71%	71%
Important to reduce GHGs	74%	71%	72%	75%	75%	73%	73%
Want choice in how electricity is generated	73%	66%	67%	73%	68%	65%	69%
Local clean/renewable energy owned by community	71%	67%	67%	69%	71%	71%	68%
Supportive of local electricity when \$ reinvested locally	69%	66%	69%	71%	66%	70%	69%
Pay more for clean power	24%	23%	25%	25%	23%	26%	24%

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Won't pay any more for clean power	27%	32%	30%	23%	32%	30%	21%
Dissatisfied with bill	37%	35%	28%	37%	35%	26%	34%
Satisfied with bill	59%	60%	66%	59%	58%	70%	61%

“The results tell us that the San Joaquin Valley is poised to benefit from a local energy program being employed in other parts of the state. It’s called Community Choice Energy (or Community Choice Aggregation),” said Hancock. “It introduces choice and competition into the monopoly energy industry, giving local jurisdictions the independence to deliver innovative programs and lower rates to their residents and businesses,” she said.

Community Choice Energy is a local program, governed by cities and/or counties, that buys and generates electricity for its businesses and residents. Programs are currently operational in Marin County, Sonoma County, the City of Lancaster, and the City of San Francisco. Another program in San Mateo County is launching later this year, with several others set to launch in 2017.

“These new, locally-controlled, not-for-profit agencies have been proving since 2010 that cleaner electricity can be provided at lower rates than the large utilities,” said Hancock, whose organization helped launch Sonoma Clean Power.

“Through this innovative new program, we have succeeded in not only increasing the renewable energy content consumed by the citizens of Lancaster, but also lowering their energy rates,” said R. Rex Parris, mayor of Lancaster where California’s third Community Choice program launched in 2015. “This places money squarely in the pockets of Lancaster residents and businesses, giving them more purchasing power while also keeping more money right here in our local economy,” he said.

Several local policymakers in the Valley, from Stockton to Visalia, have expressed interest in exploring Community Choice Energy as a long-term solution to stabilize electricity rates and lower emissions.

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About the Center for Climate Protection:

Founded in 2001, the Center for Climate Protection works with business, government, youth and the broader community to advance practical, science-based solutions for significant greenhouse gas emission reductions. The Center’s mission is to inspire, align, and mobilize action in response to the climate crisis.
www.climateprotection.org

About the Clean Power Exchange:

Clean Power Exchange (CPX) is a program of the Center for Climate Protection, with a mission to enhance energy democracy in California by expanding Community Choice Energy. CPX is an online hub of information, resources, and conversation for communities interested in or considering a Community Choice Energy program, and those already serving customers. www.cleanpowerexchange.org