



# Community and Energy Resilience



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Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
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WRCOG  
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# **REACH Inland Empire**

**December 5, 2025**

**Morongo Casino Resort and  
Spa**

**Karen Woodard, Realty and Planning  
Administrator Morongo Band of Mission  
Indians**



# INTRODUCTION

- Tribal government for 25+years
- Negotiated Self-Governance Compact with Office of Self Governance and Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Contract Realty and Title Services with 5 Tribes to manage their Tribal Lands
- Involved with negotiations on the SCE WOD upgrades and So Cal Gas transmission lines that are located on the Morongo Reservation
- Oversee the Tribes Realty and Title programs, Land Survey Department, Cultural Resources, Environmental Protection Department, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Construction Services and the Economic Development and Planning Committee
- Involved in Morongo's Co-generation Plant, Strategic Energy Master Plan, Commercial and Residential Utilities, Energy Grants
- Involved with CEC SB100 Tribal Working Group and have

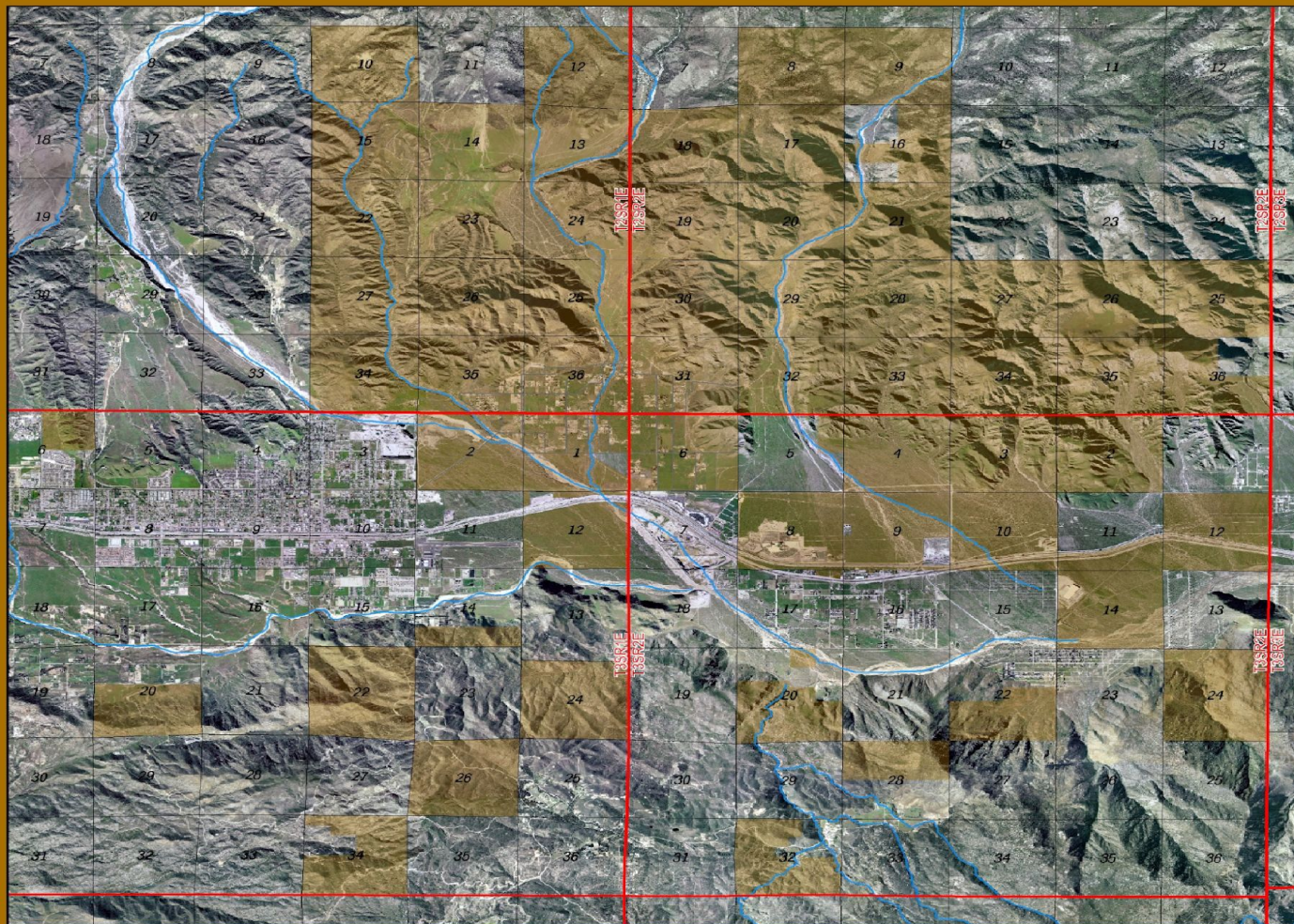


# Morongo Band of Mission Indians

- The Morongo Band of Mission Indians (MBMI) reservation is in the Banning Pass area in Riverside County, California; between the San Geronimo and San Jacinto Mountain ranges.
- Morongo Reservation is well-positioned on the I-10 corridor between the cities of San Bernardino and Palm Springs, and the Tribe as a sovereign government has the capacity to enter into competitive business agreements given the multitude of enterprises in the area.
- MBMI is the owner/operator of the Morongo Casino Resort & Spa, Morongo Travel Center, Hadley's Fruit Orchard, Tukwet Golf Course, Taco Bell and they lease land to several franchises.
- The Tribe has approximately 500+ Residents and several Civic Buildings.
- The Morongo enterprises attract hundreds of customers each







## Lands of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians

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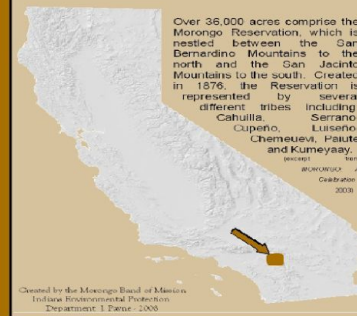
A SOVEREIGN NATION



0 1 2 3



Miles



Over 36,000 acres comprise the Morongo Reservation, which is nestled between the San Bernardino Mountains to the north and the San Jacinto Mountains to the south. Created in 1876, the Reservation is represented by several different tribes including:

- Cahuilla
- Cupeno
- Chemehuevi
- Serrano
- Luiseno
- Paute
- and Kumeyaay.

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Created by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
Indian Environmental Protection  
Department | June 2008



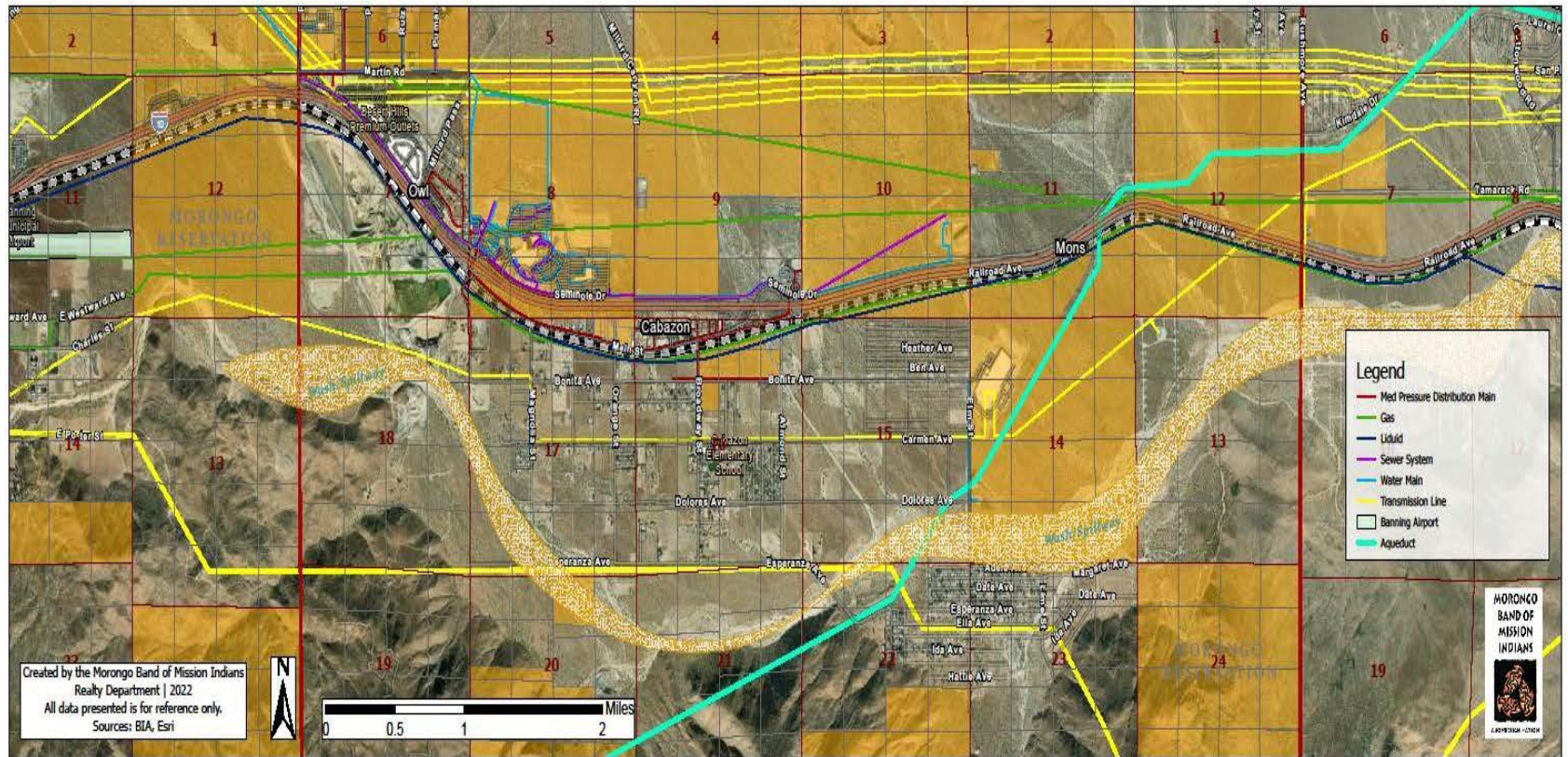
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- **Includes tribal trust lands, allotted (individual), tribally owned fee, Indian owned fee and privately owned fee parcels**
- **Morongo is located within a utility corridor and has several right of ways with Southern California Edison, So Cal Gas, T-Mobile, and Cal Trans.**
- **Right of Ways consist of major electric and gas transmission utilities that provide services to the Inland Empire and Southern California.**
- **Distribution systems provide services to Tribal Enterprises, Tribal Member Housing, government facilities and neighboring communities.**





Created by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
 Realty Department | 2022  
 All data presented is for reference only.  
 Sources: BIA, Esri



**Legend**

- Med Pressure Distribution Main
- Gas
- Liquid
- Sewer System
- Water Main
- Transmission Line
- Banning Airport
- Aqueduct



# Morongo Transmission, LLC

- **MBMI - the first Native American tribe to be a participating transmission owner in the California Independent System Operator (ISO) footprint, creating a critical connection to help meet the state's green energy goals**
- **The newly constructed West of Devers powerline connects solar, wind, and battery resources located in eastern Riverside County and Imperial Valley to the grid**
- **MBMI is currently exploring ways to expand the capacity to bring more clean power to the grid**







# Morongo Clean Energy Initiative





# MBMI's Clean Energy Priorities

**MBMI's Commitment to Energy Independence:** MBMI is dedicated to launching new energy projects on its territory, aiming to enhance its self-reliance in energy and bolster economic stability over the long term.

**Valuing Self-Governance and Autonomy:** The Tribe greatly values its ability to govern itself. In response to current market fluctuations, the Tribe is taking steps to strengthen its independence. This includes developing sturdy infrastructure that serves the needs of its members and designing rate systems that position the Tribe favorably for entering lucrative and competitive commercial contracts

**Focus on Reducing External Dependencies:** A key long-term objective for MBMI is to lessen its reliance on outside groups, enhancing the Tribe's self-sufficiency. In pursuit of this aim, MBMI has established a Tribal Utility Authority, which is tasked with the creation of a Special Utility District.



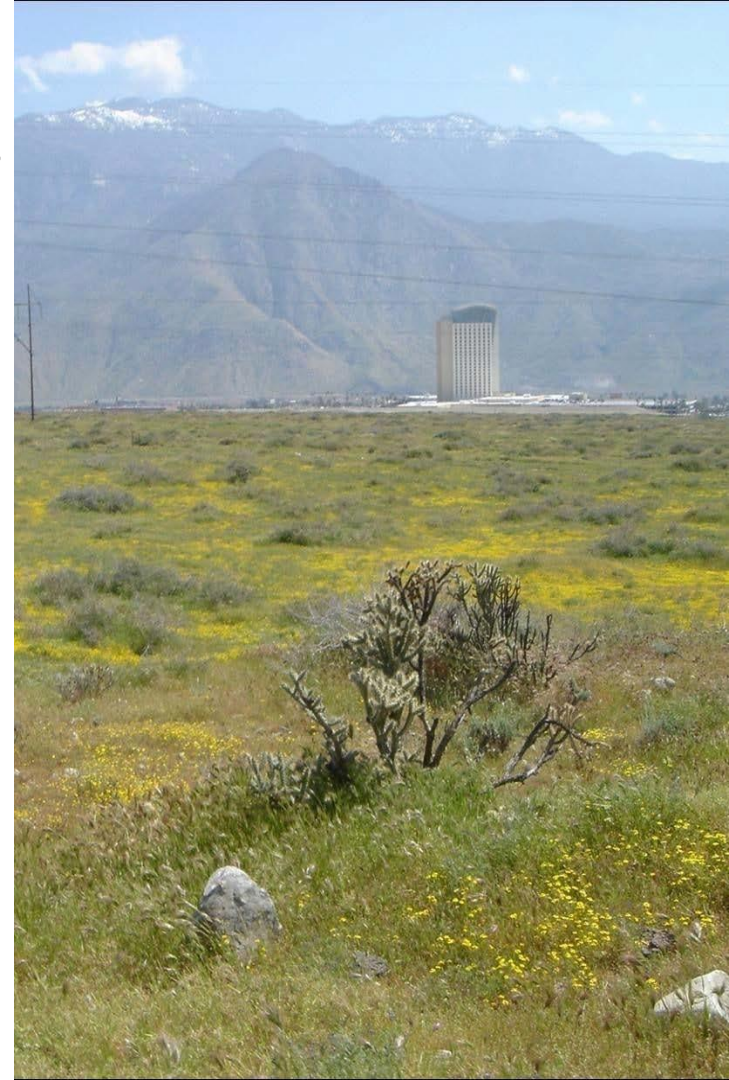
# Morongo Renewable Energy Goals

- **Develop Renewable Energy Sources:** Invest in renewable energy projects like solar, wind, or hydroelectric power to reduce dependence on external energy suppliers and foster environmental sustainability.
- **Strengthen Tribal Utility Authority:** to manage energy resources, distribution, and infrastructure within the tribe's jurisdiction.
- **Create a Special Utility District:** Work towards the establishment of a Special Utility District that allows for more efficient and tribe-centered management of utility services.
- **Develop Resilient Infrastructure:** Focus on building and upgrading infrastructure to be resilient against natural and man-made disruptions, ensuring a stable and reliable utility service for the tribe.



# Morongo Renewable Energy Goals

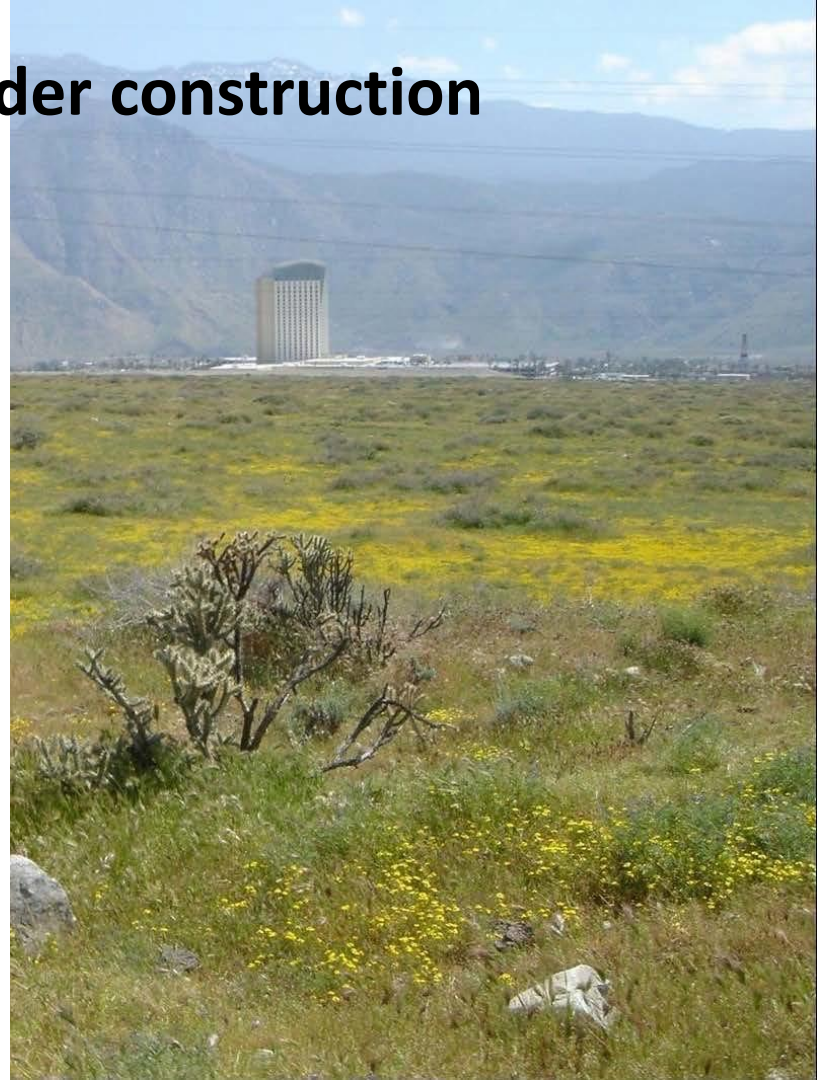
- **Implement Competitive Rate Structures:** Design and implement rate structures that are financially viable, competitive, and beneficial for the tribe, allowing for sustainable economic growth.
- **Form Strategic Business Agreements:** Enter into profitable and strategic business agreements that align with the tribe's values and goals, enhancing economic opportunities and partnerships.
- **Increase Economic Self-Sufficiency:** Develop initiatives and businesses that increase the tribe's economic self-sufficiency, reducing reliance on non-tribal entities and external funding.





# Current Clean Energy Projects under construction and in design

- Installation of 6.5 MW Carport Solar Panels
- Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations
- Co-generation Upgrades
- Battery Storage
- Micro Grids



# LAND USE

- **Morongo's Planning Committee established a general plan in 2013, which designated tribal lands for:**
  - **Commercial**
  - **Industrial/light manufacturing**
  - **Residential**
  - **Mixed use**
  - **Open space**
  - **Culturally Sensitive**
  - **Environmentally Sensitive areas, such as endangered plant and animal species.**
- **Morongo has also prepared a master plan of the I-10 Corridor for the development of approximately 3600 acres.**
- **Utility corridor maps and compatible uses for renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, battery storage, etc.**

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# THE CLIMATE LANDSCAPE

- Climate Change is affecting all tribal communities from flooding, wildfires and extreme temperatures.
- Morongo's location being at the foothills of the mountain ranges, creating an alluvial fan, causes more stormwater runoff during large storm events, which can undermine roads, utility infrastructure, homes and tribal enterprises.
- Morongo experiences regular outages for PSPS events during wind and wildfire events.
- The PSPS events affect Tribal Enterprises, the Tribe has had to invest in several generators to keep the businesses running.
- Tribal Residents are having to invest in small generators or solar and battery back up.

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# Solutions

- Tribes are coming together to assist each other in finding funding sources, education and understanding the affects of climate change and renewable energy resources.
- The Tribal Energy and Climate Collaborative (TECC) is a program of the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association (SCTCA), a non-profit organization that represents 25 federally recognized tribes throughout San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial County, which serve as the TECC Board.
- TECC was established in 2023 through state and federal grant dollars as a partnership between SCTCA and Prosper Sustainability. TECC builds upon SCTCA's 50 years of operation, and extensive intertribal collaboration on regional energy and climate issues.

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# Solutions

- **TECC's mission is to deliver clean energy and climate change solutions through a thriving, sustained and complementary Tribal Government, community based organization, and for-profit partnership ecosystem, led by SCTCA Tribes, that serves Tribes and other communities.**
- **In its first year of operation, TECC is advancing strategic partnerships, conducting Tribal needs assessments, and obtaining capacity-building grants and other resources for Tribes, including from the Strategic Growth Council's Regional Climate Collaboratives program, the National Science Foundations Economic Engine, and the CPUC Equity, Education and Engagement grant.**

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# Solutions

- Participating in other workshops and conferences, such as California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CECC).
- Inland Regional Energy Network, Western Riverside Council of Governments
- Obtaining grants such as the BIA Resiliency grant to prepare studies on climate change and renewable energy
- Utilizing the Department of Energy and Office of Indian Energy grants to prepare additional feasibility studies on energy programs for reservations, such as microgrids, renewable energy opportunities, and battery storage systems.
- Morongo is currently creating a Strategic Master Energy Plan to assist in the preparation of resiliency plans, microgrids, other energy opportunities and adding infrastructure for economic development.

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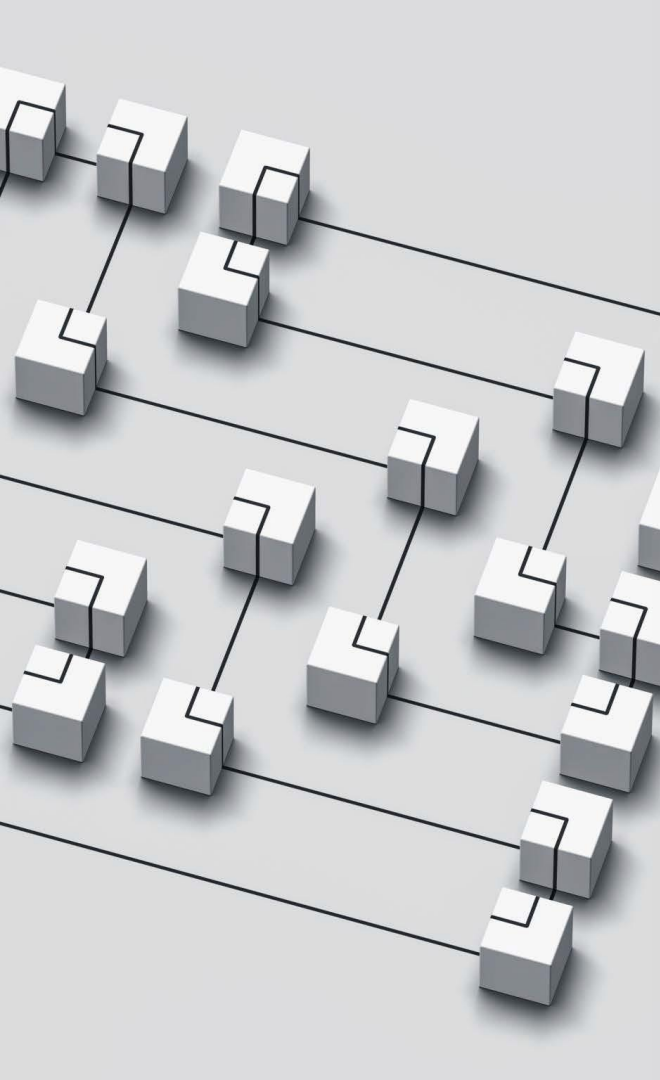
## Challenges ahead. . .

- Capacity
- Grid development
- Upgrading current substations
- Adding substations
- Locating, funding and constructing Microgrids

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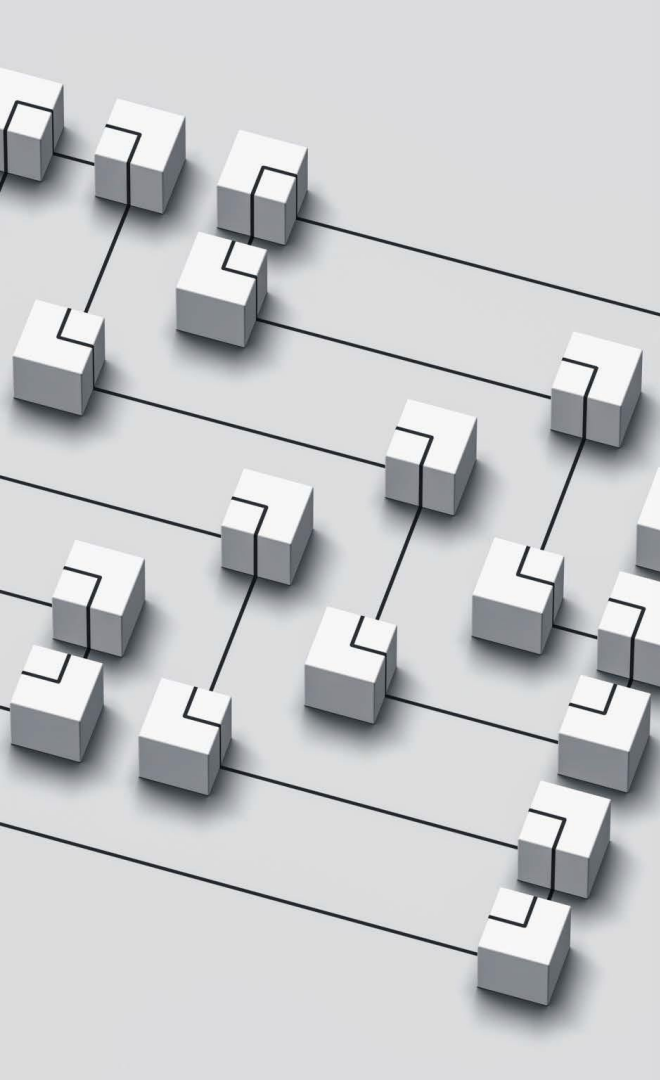


# Utility Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, and Micro Grids

## • Interconnection Constraints

- San Bernardino-Devers 230kV Transmission Line Circuits
  - With current upgrades to the transmission lines, the circuits have very high thermal ratings that can accommodate a project of 500MW without triggering a reconductoring upgrade.
  - A 230kV line break interconnection will require a new SCE owned and operated 230kV, Breaker-an-a-half Switchyard with space for 8 bays.
  - Cost can be expected to range from \$30-\$50 million.
  - Devers substation, planned to be converted by SCE to 8kA station, which has a cost north of \$80 million
  - Additional costs for monitoring points, participation in the West of Colorado River CRAS/Inland Devers Extension, upwards of \$8 million.

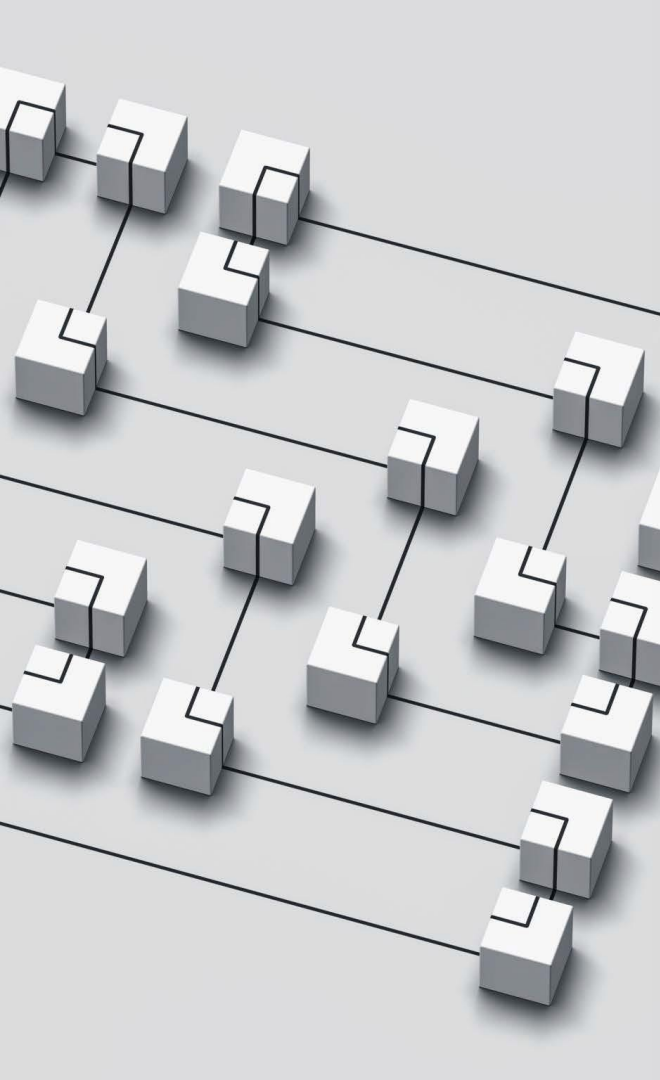




# Utility Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, and Micro Grids

## • Interconnection Constraints

- Devers 230kV Transmission Line Circuits
  - Devers Substation is extremely congested, and interconnection would require a project-owned 230kV Gen-tie line from the project substation (project site) 8-12 miles to the 230kV Devers Substation.
  - Interconnection filing will need to go through CAISO's request window opening in 2025
  - Cost can be expected to range from \$18-\$30 million, not including land costs.
  - Project risk is high due to easement acquisitions, terrain and crossings, and physical transmission congestion around the Devers Substation.



# Utility Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, and Micro Grids

## • Interconnection Constraints

- Devers 115kV Substation
  - Has not been modeled but public data indicates that the 115kV substation can accommodate approximately 37MW of capacity.
  - This option would require a project-owned 115kV Gen-tie from the project substation (project site), 115kV Devers Substation is also extremely congested, however there may be open bays that can be outfitted with breakers and bus equipment to accommodate a 115kV gen-tie.
  - Cost can be expected to range from \$12-\$25 million, to install a gen-tie line, and the constraints that affected the tie-in for Devers, affect this project as well, additional costs of \$5-15 million, for upgrades to the Devers Substation.





**DESERT HEALTHCARE**  
**DISTRICT & FOUNDATION**

Alejandro Espinoza, MPH  
Chief of Community Engagement

## What is the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation?

### Mission

To achieve optimal health at all stages of life for all District residents

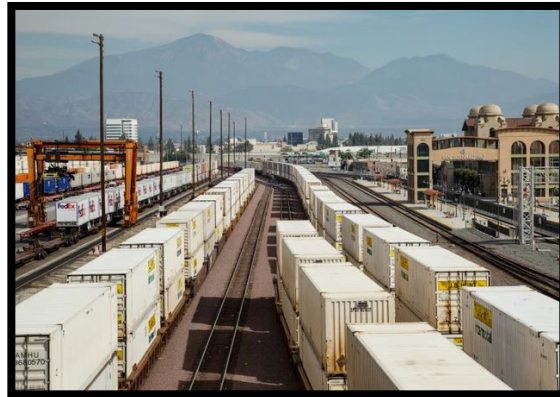
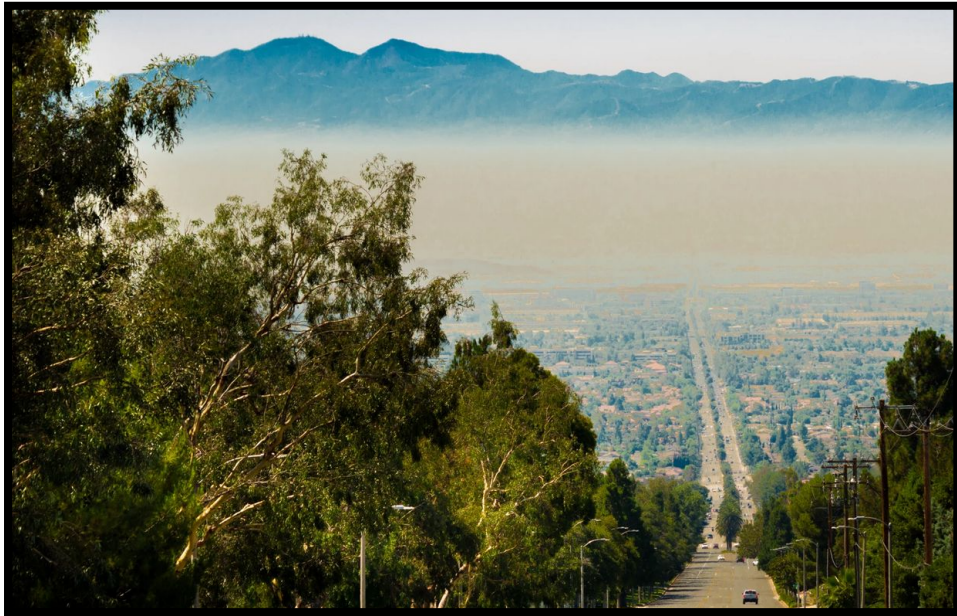
### Vision

Connecting Coachella Valley residents to health and wellness services and programs through philanthropy and resources, health facilities, information and community education, and public policy



**DESERT HEALTHCARE**  
**DISTRICT & FOUNDATION**





Earth Focus News & Public Affairs

# Inland Empire Once Again Ranks As Worst in Nation for Air Quality

Diesel trucks pass through Van Buren Boulevard and Etiwanda Avenue in Mira Loma. On Thursday, April 21, the American Lung Association once again ranked San Bernardino and Riverside Counties as the worst for ozone pollution in the nation. | Anthony Victoria

KVC R 91.9 npr Where you learn something new every day.

KVCR The Moth NEXT UP: 10

ABOUT US CALENDAR ELECTIONS ESPAÑOL EVENTS KVC R TV PROGRAMS SCHEDULE SUPPORT

Local News

## Riverside and San Bernardino County top list of U.S. counties with the worst ozone pollution

## Air pollution deaths

Researchers believe that poor air quality in Southern California leads to more deaths than any other part of the country. Analysts with New York University and the American Thoracic Society looked at pollution data from 2011, 2012 and 2013 for their estimates.

Rank	Metro area	Deaths	Illnesses*
1	Los Angeles, Long Beach, Glendale	1,341	3,255
2	Riverside, San Bernardino, Ontario	808	1,416
3	New York, Jersey City, White Plains, NY-NJ	282	977
4	Phoenix, Mesa, Scottsdale, Ariz.	283	598
5	Pittsburgh	285	533
6	Fresno	260	672
7	Bakersfield	241	333
8	Houston, The Woodlands, Sugar Land, Texas	229	661
9	Cleveland, Elyria, Ohio	196	487
10	Cincinnati	173	298

### Other California metro areas

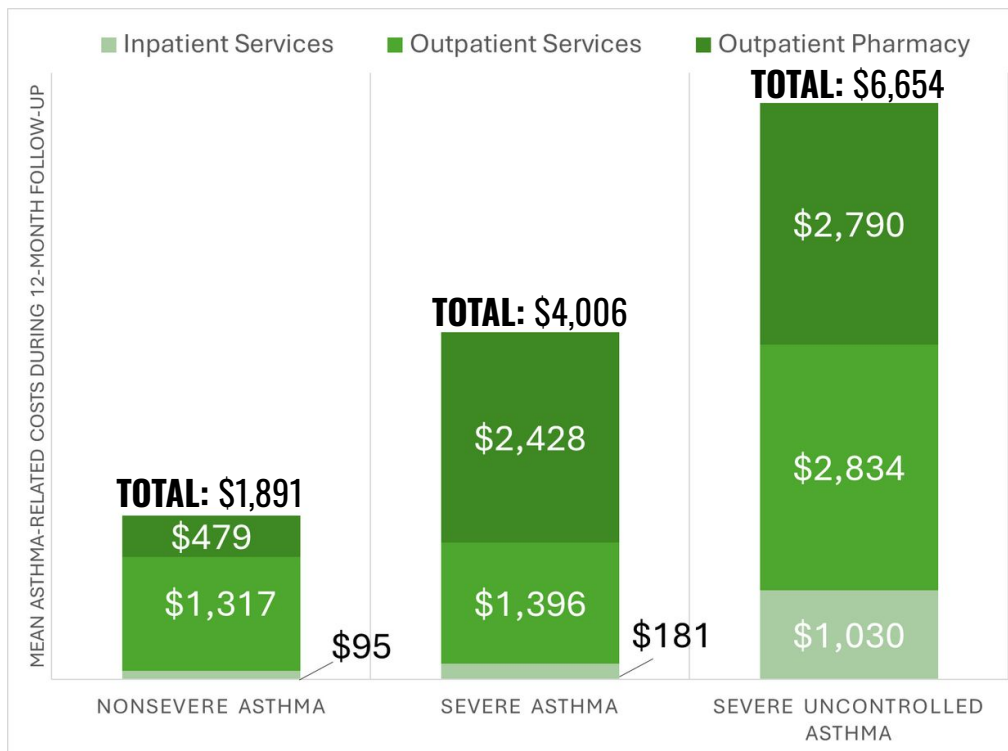
12	San Diego, Carlsbad	132	281
13	Sacramento, Roseville, Arden, Arcade	128	244
14	Modesto	130	262
17	Visalia, Porterville	117	185
19	Stockton, Lodi	100	189
31	Santa Ana, Irvine	64	140

Source: American Thoracic Society & New York University

\* Heart attacks, chronic bronchitis, cardiac & respiration hospitalizations and ER visits.



# HEALTHCARE COST BURDEN AMONG PATIENTS WITH SEVERE UNCONTROLLED ASTHMA IN THE UNITED STATES



\*All patients in the study were followed during a fixed **12-month observational period** and outpatient services included emergency department visits, outpatient office visits, lab services, radiology services, and other outpatient services

Asthma is a chronic condition with ongoing costs associated with health care utilization and time lost from work presenting a significant burden on direct and indirect health care costs in the United States. Estimated annual costs are \$50.3 billion in medical costs and \$3 billion in losses from missed work and school days.

Overall healthcare costs are impacted by asthma severity, with severe asthma contributing to higher annual health care costs and indirect costs related to work loss than those of nonsevere asthma.

The difference between total costs of nonsevere asthma and severe uncontrolled asthma, during a 12-month follow-up, is **\$4,763**.

During the same 12-month period, individuals with severe uncontrolled asthma lost **259.3 hours** from work compared to 236.2 hours for individuals with nonsevere asthma.

# ASTHMA ABSENCES AND LOST REVENUE IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS



In an average classroom of **30** kids, about **3** have asthma

Asthma is considered the chronic disease causing the highest number of school absences

LEADING TO:

- Diminished Achievement
- Reduced College & Career Opportunities
- Increased Welfare
- Incarceration Costs
- School Dropouts

Asthma-related school absences also causes school district revenue losses because some school funding in California is connected to student attendance

Asthma's Impact on Average Daily Allowance Revenue in California (2020 Report)

Days Absent from School Due to Asthma	Percentage of Students with Asthma per Absence Category (95% Confidence Interval Range)	Asthma-Related Absences (95% Confidence Interval Range)	Estimated ADA Revenue Lost*(95% Confidence Interval Range)
0	70.3 (65.1-75.4)	0	\$0
1 or 2	11.4 (7.3-15.5)	141,438 (± 32,316)	\$3,704,193 (± 846,341)
3 or 4	7.5 (5.2-9.9)	183,590 (± 28,978)	\$4,832,603 (± 758,920)
5-10	7.8 (4.4-11.1)	354,246 (± 77,537)	\$9,324,747 (± 2,030,657)
11+	3.0 (1.2-4.9)	436,079 (± 159,227)	\$11,478,820 (± 4,752,455)
Total		1,115,353 (± 181,464)	\$29,210,560 (± 4,752,455)

\*Average Daily Allowance is the total days of student attendance divided by the total days of instruction

Students who miss ≥3 school days due to asthma account for \$26 million of lost revenue

On a statewide basis, the 36% of students with asthma absences who missed ≥5 school days annually due to this condition accounted for 71%, or \$21 million of the asthma-absence revenues lost by California's 20 largest school districts

## Costs of Environmental Health Conditions in California Children



### Asthma

Environmental factors: mold, dampness, second hand smoke, chemical cleaners, animal dander, dust, pests, air pollutants, traffic proximity.



nearly **1 in 3** cases could be prevented if environmental hazards were reduced to their lowest levels.

Saving...

**\$208 million** each year.



Preventing...

**\$6 million** in losses over the lifetime of all children born in a single year.



#### Asthma in California children

Children with asthma:	926,000
ER visits per year:	72,464
Hospitalizations per year:	10,715
Treated cases of asthma per year:	530,100
Deaths per year:	14
Missed school days per year:	1.3 million

#### Total asthma costs

Directs costs (medical care):	\$869 per case
Indirect costs (lost parental income):	\$175 per missed school day
Potential earnings from years of life lost:	\$21 million

See the full report: [www.phi.org/CEHTPKidsHealthCosts](http://www.phi.org/CEHTPKidsHealthCosts)



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TRACKING PROGRAM

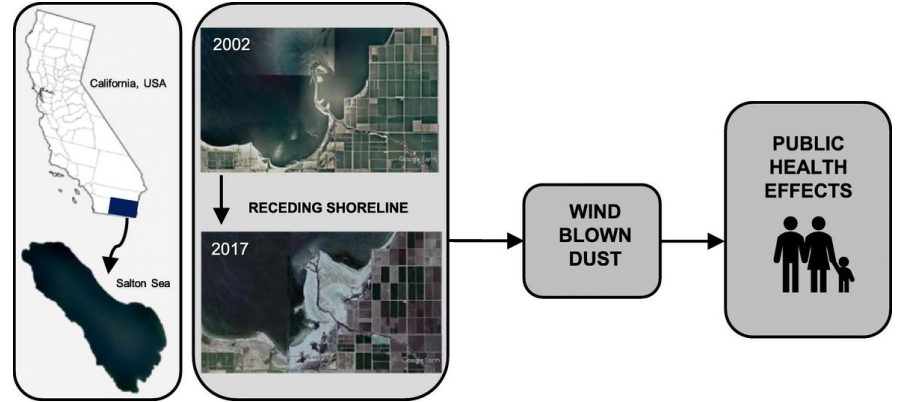


Figure 4

### Salton Sea Management Program Overview 2018-2028



LAO3



# Strategic Plan Priorities (2021-2025)

- Goal 1: Proactively increase the **financial resources** DHCD/F can apply to support community health needs
- Goal 2: Proactively expand community **access to primary and specialty care services**
- Goal 3: Proactively expand community access to **behavioral/mental health services**
- Goal 4: Proactively measure and evaluate the **impact** of DHCD/F-funded programs and services on the health of community residents
- Goal 5: Be responsive to and supportive of selected community initiatives that **enhance the economic stability** of the District residents
- Goal 6: Be responsive to and supportive of selected community initiatives that **enhance the environment in the District's service area**
- Goal 7: Be responsive to and supportive of selected community initiatives that **enhance the general education** of the District's residents



# *Environmental Health Projects*



**AB-617:** Develop and implement new strategies to measure air pollution and reduce health impacts, alongside community members and key stakeholders.



**Public Health Institute:** Coachella Valley air quality assessment and health impact analysis.



**SCAQMD-Air Quality Academy:** In partnership with Alianza CV, community members are being empowered to learn more about air quality and install an air monitor in their home to get hyper-local data.



**CONCUR, Inc:** Develop an Air Quality Emergency Communication Plan to coordinate communication between fire response agencies, CVUSD, and families.

## POLICY ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

### COACHELLA VALLEY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES



#### IDENTIFY and ADDRESS resident needs for healthcare access and clinical services

- Evidence shows that the most vulnerable residents may be living with undiagnosed and unmanaged respiratory symptoms
- **Strategies to address include:** growth in community relationships/trust, target health insurance barriers, deeper reach into high-risk areas, and improved diagnosis and management of air quality-related health conditions



#### Continue to ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY throughout all policy arenas

- Leveraging air quality planning and policy to benefit the social and economic well-being of low-income communities will provide more impactful public health benefits than reducing pollution alone
- **Strategies to address include:** develop and sustain long-term relationships and collaborations with local residents, orgs., businesses, and gov. entities and advocate for the development of equitable policies

Source: Tracking California - Policies and Strategies to Improve Air Quality and Public Health in Coachella Valley

## POLICY ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES

### COACHELLA VALLEY MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES



#### ACCELERATE organizational emission reductions

- The South Coast Air District notes there is no viable pathway to achieve ozone attainment by 2037 other than widespread adoption of zero-emission technologies for all stationary and mobile sources
- **Strategies to address include:** an org. can lead the community by advancing internal emissions reductions, including an audit of existing emissions and the acceleration of zero and low emissions technologies throughout its operations



#### DEVELOP collaborative relationships to ADVANCE emission controls

- Organizations in positions of power are well suited to collaborate and engage with a diverse group of stakeholders to address air quality improvement planning and implementation efforts
- **Strategies to address include:** identify community needs, pursue and monitor air quality goals in emission reduction plans, and prioritize emission reduction initiatives (Ex. home weatherization, electric vehicle access/infrastructure)

Source: Tracking California - Policies and Strategies to Improve Air Quality and Public Health in Coachella Valley





# Questions?

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