

SOMAH Public Forum Notes

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022

Time: 1-2:30 p.m.

Purpose

The purpose of the SOMAH Public Forum is to share program progress and updates while creating an opportunity for program stakeholders and participants to ask questions, share concerns and provide feedback.

The forum is suited for multifamily affordable housing property owners, solar contractors, community-based organizations (affordable housing, environmental justice, tenants' rights, etc.), investor-owned utilities (IOUs), community choice aggregators and job training organizations interested in getting program updates and providing feedback to the SOMAH Program Administrator.

Welcome & Introductions

Jaimie Joo, SOMAH program coordinator, gave an overview of the purpose of the forum, agenda and introduced members of the SOMAH Program Administrator Team (SOMAH PA). Jaimie began by stating SOMAH stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and with all who are fighting for a just and equitable future. Further acknowledgements continued for standing in solidarity with SOMAH's CBO partners like Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), condemning the violence against California's Asian communities. The introduction concluded by honoring Black History and Black Futures Month as the SOMAH PA celebrates the Black individuals and communities throughout history who continue to advance the environmental movement forward.

Session 1: SOMAH Program Update

Jaimie began with an overview of application statistics and a funding update that incentive funds are currently available in all five program territories with no waitlists and over \$260 million in available incentive funds.

Utility Territory	# of Active Applications
Pacific Gas and Electric	267
Southern California Edison	149

San Diego Gas & Electric	54
Liberty	1
PacifiCorps	2
Totals	473

The PA is proud to report 34% of active applications are located in DACs, which continues to be a targeted focus of the SOMAH Program. Additionally, tenants are slated to receive 88% of the electricity generated from SOMAH installations. The active applications also are estimated to serve more than 38,000 tenants with an average system size of 174 kW. There are currently 13 participating contractors in the program, with 10 additional subcontractors reported at this time. The pipeline also supports over 880 training opportunities with more than 59,000 projected training hours. These job training opportunities equate to over \$1.2 million in projected wages leveraging over 60 job training organization relationships.

At this time, there are 141 SOMAH projects currently eligible for Progress Payments. So far, 13 Progress Payments have been issued (\$2,984,355) with one additional project currently being processed. Completed projects and incentive payments have had increased activity as well, with 16 final incentive payments issued (\$5,056,879), and 14 additional projects close behind at Incentive Claim Milestone, inspection and pending payment. The 16 complete and paid projects account for 3.2 MW of solar servicing of 1,600 tenant units across the state. The PA anticipates increased project completion activity throughout 2022 as more projects progress in their installation and application processes. Nineteen projects have upcoming incentive claim due dates in Q1 2022, and 204 projects have incentive claim due dates in Q2 or Q3 2022.

Jaimie continued with an introduction of the updated SOMAH Eligible Properties Map and passed the presentation to Kajsa Hendrickson, SOMAH program manager, for more information on the map updates. Kajsa started with a brief overview of the prior functionality with the five tabs for changing the visuals: Disadvantaged Communities, Electric Utilities, Legislative Districts, Climate Zones and Notes. The biggest update to the map is the smart filtering feature, which allows for layering searches within the filtering panel like counties, ZIP codes and state senate and assembly districts. Kajsa also reported that a highly requested feature for downloadable data is now available on the map. Attendees were reminded with a disclaimer that the eligible property map shows properties that are *likely* eligible and that the projects listed are not guaranteed eligibility for the SOMAH Program.

Jaimie announced that the SOMAH PA filed an Advice Letter to update the Program

Handbook on February 15 including substantive updates including application deposit waivers for priority applications (i.e., DACs), DACs benchmark (40% by 2026), Code of Conduct Compliance with Job Training & Tenant Education Requirements and CalEnviroScreen 3.0 to 4.0. Minor handbook updates include removal of PPM Checklist submittal requirement, return of app deposit, grounds for program recourse and fleet monitoring. The protest and response period is open through March 7, 2022.

Jaimie closed out the session one presentation by highlighting the SOMAH PA's technical assistance, job training and tenant education services as well as collaboration opportunities for celebrating completed projects. Jaimie gave an overview of SOMAH's suite of no-cost technical assistance and support services and advised that the PA is working to consolidate these services into one place on the website and in the program to streamline and ensure that everyone has knowledge and access to these complementary services whenever they're needed. Jaimie also shared a reminder about SOMAH's job training support, outlining that the PA provides recruitment and placement support, job training portal guidance and connection to local job training organizations, in addition to education and development. For tenant education services, Jaimie called out the free tenant education support services for Tenant Education Service workshops, Tenant Education "train the trainer" and Tenant Education 101 meetings as opportunities for participants to receive assistance from the SOMAH PA. Jaimie concluded with a note that the SOMAH PA wants to help participants celebrate with ribbon-cutting ceremonies or other events related to bringing solar to their communities or raising awareness about the SOMAH Program.

Session 1 Q&A

Q: Scott Sarem, Sunrun: Are you able to search by owner?

A: No, to limit personally identifiable information, property owner information is not included in the SOMAH Eligible Properties Map.

Q: Richard Esteves, QCS CA: What is the average incentive for each applicant?

A: The incentive range varies from project to project, but of the 16 projects SOMAH has paid incentives for thus far, the incentives have ranged from \$126,000 to \$661,000.

Q: Jessica Clegg, GRID: When are the February 15 handbook changes expected to be implemented?

A: The handbook Advice Letter is submitted and currently going through a Public Comment period where stakeholders can comment on the PA's proposed changes as outlined in the Advice Letter. The comment period closes March 7 and then the Advice Letter goes to the CPUC for review and final approval. Ideally this process takes on

average three to six months, but it's important to note that the timeline can vary for a variety of reasons.

Q: Richard Esteves, QCS CA: Is there a deadline to complete installation? How many applications have been terminated due to missed installation deadlines?

A: There is not a specific deadline to complete the installation, but the program does have an 18-month reservation period to finalize the installation and receive PTO from the utility. The installation can be completed at any point during that reservation period. Applicants also have the ability to request a six-month or 180-day extension request for the Incentive Claim Milestone deadline to account for unforeseen delays beyond the customer's control. No projects have been canceled for incomplete or missed installation timelines.

Q: Richard Esteves, QCS CA: Are the names of the properties available from the map?

A: Yes, if you scroll over any of the property dots on the map, a summary window will pop up that will include the property name.

Session 2: SOMAH's Third-party Evaluation: Recommendations & Implementation

Kajsa Hendrickson and Chris Walker, SOMAH program managers provided an update on SOMAH's third-party evaluation with a summary of recommendations and implementation plans.

Kajsa started with a review of Phase II evaluation efforts of data collection and reporting. Phase II data collection occurred from August 2020 through June 2021 and included interviews and web surveys, IOU data request, impact analysis and culminated in a final Phase II Evaluation Report. Phase II reporting efforts occurred in September 2021 through February 2022 and included a draft report release, public comment period, final report, PA and IOU response to recommendations and publishing of final report and responses. Kajsa continued to explain that the final report continued 19 findings with 41 unique recommendations for the SOMAH PA and three recommendations for the IOUs. The response to recommendations were submitted with public comment completed on 2/7 along with reply comments to the final report and comments submitted to Energy Division on 2/18.

Kajsa provided a breakdown of the key recommendations that the PA has sorted into five general categories: 1) remove barriers to participation for contractors and

properties, 2) increase support for contractors, 3) expand support for property owners, 4) increase SOMAH Program awareness and 5) program incentives. Chris Walker then expanded on those categories including key recommendations and a high-level summary of the SOMAH PA's plans to address them. Chris also shared that the SOMAH PA is examining the financial value proposition to ensure it supports the attainment of 300 MW by the end of 2030 and will begin engaging stakeholders in Q1 in consideration of any proposed changes. The detailed Phase II Evaluation Report outlining these recommendations can be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/somah/> under "SOMAH Evaluation Reports."

Session 2 Q&A

Q: Richard Esteves, QCS CA: Is that part of the data download if they are part of the items identified?

A: Yes, the property name is included in the map data download.

Q: Scott Sarem, Sunrun: Do you see the NEM 3 proceeding impacting the SOMAH Program?

A: The tariff structure required for SOMAH projects is not changed in the current version of the Proposed Decision [PD]. The Proposed Decision states that it will be examined in the future. PUC Section 2870(g) requires that low-income tenants who participate in SOMAH must receive credits on their utility bills from the program, and the CPUC is required to ensure that utility bill reductions are achieved through VNEM [virtual net energy metering] tariffs that allow for the allocation of credits. VNEM is mandated because it is the only way tenants are guaranteed to receive the full benefits credited to them from solar. There remains inherent risk in this uncertainty for VNEM, given the present direction of the CPUC's revisions to NEM in the PD. Specifically, property managers already face a difficult decision regarding participation in SOMAH as they weigh the benefits of participation against the time and effort required and their various competing priorities. Uncertainty surrounding compensation rates for net exports will likely further dampen enthusiasm on the part of affordable housing property managers to participate in the SOMAH Program.

Q: Richard Esteves, QCS CA: Are the loan fees and interest charged reimbursed under the incentives offered?

A: Yes, Section 3.3.1 of the handbook, eligible costs, include: cost of capital included in the system price by the vendor, contractor, subcontractor or seller (the entity that sells the system) is eligible if paid by the system owner. This includes, but is not limited to, financing costs associated with loans or lines of credit.

Q: Jessica Clegg, GRID: Do lists of gap funding opportunities already exist or is that

something SOMAH will release in the future?

A: The list of gap financiers has not been released yet, but if your project has an immediate need, you can contact the PA, and we will start to match you with an available gap financier.

Q: Scott Sarem, Sunrun: How do changes in incentive levels get changed? Through a proposed decision or can it be done through PA action and advice letter?

A: Changing the incentive would need to be done through a Petition for Modification (PFM) because SOMAH's incentive rates and incentive design were decided in the Final Decision.

Q: Scott Sarem, Sunrun: Will the PA file the petition for modification, and what is the timing?

A: The SOMAH PA has completed third-party evaluation, which started a high-level review on this topic. The PA is taking the evaluation information and deploying a more in-depth analysis to see if we will be able to meet our 300 MW goal with the current program and incentive structure. From that research, the PA will assess what our next steps are, one of which could be a Petition for Modification. The PA is currently conducting the research and looking to complete the research in the next couple of weeks. From there, the PA can better understand next steps and build out a timeline. The PA will be able to report more information on what this will look like at the next Public Forum.

Looking Ahead & Next Steps

Jaimie Joo wrapped up with next steps highlighting the following dates for upcoming SOMAH events:

- **March 22:** SOMAH Technical Assistance and Support Services Overview
- **March 24:** March Applicant and Contractor Eligibility Training
- **March 29:** Inclusive Hiring Practices for Solar Employers
- **May 22:** SOMAH Public Forum (Q2)
- **May 26:** May Applicant and Contractor Eligibility Training

Jaimie also shared a call to action for participants to share their SOMAH experiences. The PA is soliciting feedback and looking for participants to interview, photos from projects and stories or testimonials about their SOMAH experiences. Interested parties should email contact@CalSOMAH.org. Jaimie flagged that another way to get involved and follow along with SOMAH is through social media highlighting program channels.

- Twitter | @CalSOMAH
- Facebook | facebook.com/CalSOMAH

- Instagram | @calsomah
- LinkedIn | [linkedin.com/company/calsomah/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/calsomah/)

Jaimie concluded with a reminder that the Public Forum slide deck would be emailed to registered participants on [CalSOMAH.org](https://www.CalSOMAH.org), and notes will follow within five business days.

For additional questions and feedback, please contact the SOMAH PA.

Email: contact@CalSOMAH.org

Web form: [CalSOMAH.org/contact-us](https://www.CalSOMAH.org/contact-us)

General hotline: 858-244-1177 ext. 5

Tenant hotline: 800-843-9728