



CVAG

**ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026
12:00 p.m.**

**Coachella Valley Water District
Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room
75515 Hovley Lane East
Palm Desert, CA 92260**

Members of the Committee and the public may attend and participate by video at the following remote location:

**Blythe City Hall
235 N Broadway, Room A
Blythe, CA 92225**

Members of the public may use the following link for listening access and ability to address the Energy & Sustainability Committee when called upon:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83098567932?pwd=rEOYq3bk2VbZ0l3dzybUcYBs0Fswbu.1>

**Dial In: +1 669 900 9128
Webinar ID: 830 9856 7932
Password: 257394**

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO CONNECT VIA DIAL IN OPTION, PLEASE CALL 760-346-1127

Public Comment is encouraged to be emailed to the Energy & Sustainability Committee prior to the meeting at cvag@cvag.org by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the committee meeting. Members of the public joining the meeting by Zoom can also provide comment by using the “raise hand” feature or hitting *9 on the phone keypad.

As a convenience to the public, CVAG provides a call-in and internet-based option for members of the public to virtually observe and provide public comments at its meetings. Please note that, in the event of a technical issue disrupting the call-in or internet-based options, the meeting will continue unless otherwise required by law.

THIS MEETING IS ADA ACCESSIBLE.

**ACTION MAY RESULT ON ANY ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA.
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, ALL ACTION ITEMS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FINAL APPROVAL.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, City of Indio, Chair P4
 - Roll Call
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Agenda Modification
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

This is the first of two opportunities for public comment. Any person wishing to address the Energy & Sustainability Committee on items appearing on this agenda may do so at this time. At the discretion of the Chair, comments may be taken at the time items are presented. Please limit comments to three (3) minutes.

3. **COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**
 - A. **Approve the minutes from the February 12, 2026, meeting** P5

 - B. **Authorize the Executive Director to take the necessary steps to accept funding from Coachella Valley Water District and the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District for the region’s Landscape Certification Program, and then scale the program’s scope to the available budget** P8

- 4.1 **ITEMS HELD OVER FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

5. **DISCUSSION / ACTION**
 - A. **Local Efforts to Address Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium- 6) – Joanne Le, Coachella Valley Water District’s Director of Environmental Services** P10

Recommendation: Information

- B. Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment Program – Danielle Soto, South Coast Air Quality Management District’s Local Government/Community Outreach Manager** **P12**

Recommendation: Information

- C. Public Sector Projects Policy Update and Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget – Jacob Alvarez** **P13**

Recommendation: Authorize the CVAG representative on the Inland Regional Energy Network (IREN) Executive Committee to 1.) support a suspension of the current policy limiting an agency’s concurrent Cash for Kilowatts projects, so long as it maintains the overall project cap and 2.) approve the Fiscal Year 2026-27 I-REN Budget

6. INFORMATION

- A. Attendance Record** **P15**

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

This is the second opportunity for public comment. Any person wishing to address the Energy & Sustainability Committee on items of general interest within the purview of this Committee may do so at this time. Please limit comments to two (2) minutes.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at noon at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, April 27, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

9. ADJOURN

ITEM 1

**Energy & Sustainability Committee
Member Roster
2025 – 2026**



VOTING MEMBERS	
City of Blythe	Mayor Joseph DeConinck
City of Cathedral City	Councilmember Nancy Ross
City of Coachella	Councilmember Stephanie Virgen
Coachella Valley Water District	Director Anthony Bianco
City of Desert Hot Springs	Mayor Pro Tem Dirk Voss
Imperial Irrigation District	Director JB Hamby
City of Indian Wells	Mayor Toper Taylor
City of Indio	Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, <i>Chair</i>
City of La Quinta	Mayor Linda Evans, <i>Vice Chair</i>
Mission Springs Water District	Director Amber Duff
City of Palm Desert	Councilmember Gina Nestande
City of Palm Springs	Mayor Naomi Soto
City of Rancho Mirage	Councilmember Ted Weill
Riverside County – District 4	Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Tribal Chairman Joseph Mirelez
Ex-Officio / Non-Voting Members	
Riverside County – District 5	Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

ITEM 4A

Energy & Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes February 12, 2026



The audio file for this meeting can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Oscar Ortiz, City of Indio, at 12 p.m. at the Coachella Valley Water District Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 East Hovely Lane, in the City of Palm Desert. Zoom videoconferencing was available from the City of Blythe and Imperial Irrigation District's office in El Centro.

ROLL CALL – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Mayor Joseph DeConinck
Councilmember Nancy Ross
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen***
Director Anthony Bianco*
Mayor Pro Tem Dirk Voss
Director JB Hamby
Mayor Topper Taylor
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, *Chair*
Mayor Linda Evans, *Vice Chair*
Director Amber Duff
Councilmember Gina Nestande***
Councilmember Ted Weill***
Mayor Naomi Soto**
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez***

Agency

City of Blythe (*via Zoom*)
City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
Coachella Valley Water District
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District (*via Zoom*)
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Rancho Mirage
City of Palm Springs
Riverside County – District 4

Members/ Ex-Officios Not Present

Tribal Chair Joseph Mirelez
Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Riverside County – District 5

**arrived at item 2*

*** arrived at start of item 5A*

**** left at conclusion of item 5A*

Mayor Linda Evans led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no agenda modifications or conflicts of interest announced.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

3. COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Tom Kirk thanked the Coachella Valley Water District for their hospitality in hosting the CVAG committee meetings and announced the meeting logistics.

Mr. Kirk also expressed appreciation to Imperial Irrigation District Director JB Hamby and the IID team for their efforts in helping roll out the nearly \$3 million CAL FIRE grant to plant shade trees throughout the Imperial and Coachella Valleys.

Chair Ortiz provided an update to the Committee on the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) and the initiatives currently underway.

Supervisor V. Manuel Perez announced that the opening ceremony for the Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival would take place today, February 12, at 2 p.m. at the fairgrounds, and invited everyone to attend the festival, which runs through March 1, 2026.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve the minutes from the November 13, 2025, meeting**
- B. Authorize the Executive Director to execute a two-year services contract with Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$45,000 through October 2027 to administer the Waste Tire Amnesty Grant Program, contingent upon receipt of TA8 grant funding from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), with the option for two one-year terms if additional funding is secured**
- C. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-002-ES authorizing the CVAG Energy & Sustainability Committee, as an eligible multijurisdictional body, to utilize the teleconferencing provisions established under Senate Bill 707**

IT WAS MOVED BY DIRECTOR DUFF AND SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR PEREZ TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 4 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.

Mayor DeConinck	Aye
Mayor Ross	Aye
Councilmember Virgen	Aye
Director Bianco	Aye
Councilmember Voss	Aye
Director Hamby	Aye
Mayor Taylor	Aye
Councilmember Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Evans	Aye
Director Duff	Aye
Councilmember Nestande	Aye
Mayor Soto	Absent
Councilmember Weill	Aye
Supervisor Perez	Aye
Tribal Chairman Mirelez	Absent

4.1 ITEMS HELD OVER FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

None

5. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Addressing Air Quality in the Coachella Valley

Air Quality Management District Deputy Executive Officer Sarah Reese introduced the item with a brief update before turning it over to Planning and Rules Manager Dr. Scott Epstein, who delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining recent dust-level findings and providing an update on ongoing efforts to address dust issues in the Coachella Valley.

Robust member discussion ensued with Dr. Epstein and Ms. Reese answering questions from Committee members regarding presented findings and plans to address dust issues.

No action was taken as this was an informational item only.

B. Local Efforts to Address Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium- 6)

Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to move Item 5B on the Discussion/Action agenda to the next meeting.

6. INFORMATION – The following items were provided in the agenda for information only:

A. Attendance Record

B. Conflict of Interest Guidance

C. Inland Regional Energy Network’s Business Plan and Public Sector Update

D. Status of the Salton Sea Conservancy

E. 2025 Annual Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Report

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at noon at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

9. ADJOURN – Chair Ortiz adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Elysia Regalado, Deputy Clerk*

ITEM 4B

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee**

April 9, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: CVAG's Landscape Certification Program

Contact: Emmanuel Martinez, Assistant Director – Energy & External Affairs
(emartinez@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Director to take the necessary steps to accept funding from Coachella Valley Water District and the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District for the region's Landscape Certification Program, and then scale the program's scope to the available budget

Background: CVAG, in partnership with College of the Desert (COD), and Coachella Valley Water District, administers the regional [Landscape Certification Program](#). This program ensures that landscape companies operating within the Coachella Valley meet required standards for overseeding practices, to help reduce PM 10 and prevent lawn scalping. The program also provides companies with best practices related to water conservation, and sustainable landscape management. Certification is a prerequisite for landscape companies to conduct business within CVAG-member jurisdictions. Landscape companies seeking a new, or renewing an old, business license are required to complete the certification course.

CVAG partners with COD to deliver training, testing, and certification services to landscape professionals. The program is widely used by local jurisdictions, HOAs, and private landscape companies to ensure compliance with regional standards. The program includes mandatory online courses covering overseeding practices and water conservation. These courses are required for certification and must remain accessible to participants throughout the year. Last year, the program was updated to include a component related to mosquito abatement. CVAG partnered with the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District (CVMVCD) to integrate the new component into the program, expanding the program and increasing educational benefits to companies that can help improve the region's health and safety.

In September 2025, the CVAG Executive Committee, at the recommendation of the Energy & Sustainability Committee, authorized the Executive Director to take the necessary steps to accept \$40,000 from the Colmac Air Quality Enhancement Fund Grant Program. This had been a longtime funding source for the program, utilizing mitigation funding from the Colmac energy facility in Mecca. As noted in the staff report at the time, the funding source was depleted as environmental concerns related to pollutant emissions and action by the Environmental Protection Agency had led to the plant being shut down.

Given the funding issue, CVAG staff reached out to its partners at CVMVCD and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) about how to maintain the program. Both agencies have agreed to consider splitting the funding costs, assuming the budget could be reduced and agreed upon. CVAG staff also worked with COD to reshape the program budget to address funding reductions, while the essential components of the program remain intact.

For next year, the cost for hosting the online training is \$15,000, which includes the following deliverables:

- Hosting the CVAG Online Overseeding and Water Conservation Courses on the COD webpage;
- Technical support, including troubleshooting and periodic functional checks;
- Participant use of COD computers, available Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and
- Bilingual assistance.

Staff is now recommending the Executive Director be authorized to finalize negotiations and accept the funding from CVWD and CVMVCD, and scale the landscaping program's scope to the available budget.

Fiscal Analysis: Under the proposed funding plan, CVWD and CVMVCD will each contribute \$7,500 for the yearly cost to operate the program. COD is able to operate a streamlined program under the \$15,000 budget, which will be reflected in CVAG's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget when it is presented in June.

CVAG staff will also continue to coordinate the program with its member jurisdictions to ensure compliance with the established requirements and provide reports and updates to pertinent committees as needed. Additionally, staff will continue to seek outside funding for the program and will report back accordingly on funding and programmatic changes to it.

Should either CVWD or CVMVCD not commit to funding the program, staff would evaluate funding sources, including asking participating member agencies to help address funding gaps.

ITEM 5A

Coachella Valley Association of Governments Energy & Sustainability Committee April 9, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Local Efforts to Address Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium- 6)

Contact: Emmanuel Martinez, Assistant Director – Energy & External Affairs
(emartinez@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: This item was originally on the February meeting agenda but was not presented due to time constraints. Joanne Le, Coachella Valley Water District's (CVWD) Director of Environmental Services, will attend the April meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee to provide an update on the district's efforts related to Hexavalent Chromium or chromium-6.

Chromium-6 is a naturally occurring heavy metal found in the geology of the Coachella Valley groundwater basin. Although the majority of the chromium found in drinking water occurs naturally, industrial activities can also contribute to groundwater contamination of chromium, especially when industrial sites fail to follow safe disposal procedures. According to health assessments, long-term exposure (70 years) to chromium-6 can result in cancer. To address naturally occurring chromium in drinking water and potential health impacts, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) established a [chromium-6 maximum contaminant level](#) (MCL) of 10 parts per billion (ppb), which became effective October 1, 2024. This new standard was set to align with [public health goals](#), established by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHAA).

California is the first and only state in the nation to adopt a drinking water standard for chromium-6. All other states adhere to the federal drinking water standard for total chromium, which is 100 ppb, including chromium-3 and chromium-6. The California drinking water standard for total chromium is 50 ppb, including chromium-3 and chromium-6. In the Coachella Valley, the average level of natural occurring chromium-6 in CVWD's wells is 9.4 ppb, with a range of 0 to 22 ppb.

Adhering to the new drinking water standard for chromium-6 can have a significant financial impact. The new standard presents a significant financial challenge to local public water systems and the ratepayers they serve. According to the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), the cost of complying with the new regulation exceeds \$350 million, which will likely impact water rates for CVWD customers. Costs of implementing new filtration technology and related infrastructure upgrades has been a concern since the time the new MCL was first adopted by the SWRCB in 2014, and then later invalidated by the courts. In 2014, recognizing the financial burden, the California Legislature enacted SB 385 in 2015, which authorized the SWRCB to grant public water systems a variance for complying with the new MCL standard. In 2017, the MCL was invalidated by the courts for not sufficiently analyzing the economic feasibility. The 2024 rulemaking addresses the financial concerns by updating cost estimates

and assessments, compliance plans, and financial assistance programs for affected agencies. Most recently, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 466 in 2025 which provides legal protection to water agencies actively implementing approved chromium-6 compliance measures, shielding them from lawsuits while remediation efforts are underway.

The new MCL compliance schedule is as follows:

System Size (as of regulation's effective date)	Compliance Schedule	Compliance Monitoring Begins
10,000 service connections or more	2 years from regulation's effective date	October 1, 2026
1,000 to 9,999 service connections	3 years from regulation's effective date	October 1, 2027
Less than 1,000 service connections	4 years from regulation's effective date	October 1, 2028

Establishing a MCL for chromium-6 has been an ongoing effort, and the new 2024 rulemaking is also being challenged in court for inadequate economic analysis and for not sufficiently exploring alternatives, including failing to meet the state's Human Right to Water Policy. While the courts adjudicate the issue, public water agencies in the Coachella Valley are working to comply with the new MCL standard. Coachella Valley Water District and other local water agencies have [notified customers](#) regarding this issue as mandated by state law. The District has submitted the required compliance and implementation plans to the State, developed large-scale ion exchange treatment projects, and built a demonstration project in 2017, which successfully reduced chromium-6 to chromium-3 using stannous chloride. CVWD is also working on integrating this technology with its pipeline delivery system.

CVAG staff would note that Indio Water Authority, Coachella Water Authority, and Mission Springs Water District are also working towards adhering to the new standard, including submitting compliance plans to the State and notifying customers. Desert Water Agency is the only entity in the Coachella Valley that has not detected chromium-6 above MCL in its water distribution. Water system consumer confidence reports and hexavalent chromium testing information is available on California's [Drinking Water Watch](#).

Fiscal Analysis: There is no cost for providing this update to the committee.

ITEM 5B

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
April 9, 2026



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment Program

Contact: Jacob Alvarez, Program Manager (jalvarez@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: The South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) administers the Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment Program, which provides incentives to replace older gasoline- or diesel-powered commercial lawn and garden equipment with new zero-emission, battery-electric alternatives. The program is available to commercial landscapers, local government agencies, schools and non-profit organizations, and requires the scrapping of one operable gasoline- or diesel-powered piece of equipment to qualify for incentive funding toward replacement equipment.

The program supports regional air quality goals by reducing emissions from small off-road engines and provides point-of-sale discounts, through a voucher-based process, to lower the cost of adopting electric equipment.

South Coast AQMD staff previously introduced this program to CVAG member jurisdictions' staffs during the inaugural Energy & Sustainability Roundtable on February 11, 2026. To further highlight available resources and participation opportunities, Danielle Soto, South Coast AQMD's Local Government/Community Outreach Manager, will provide an overview at the April meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee. This presentation also provides an opportunity to connect member jurisdictions and local businesses with incentives that advance regional air quality and electrification goals.

The Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment Program reduces the purchase price of the commercial-grade battery electric lawn and garden equipment. The program provides up to a 85% discount, subject to funding caps. Additional program details, including eligibility and participating retailers, are available on the South Coast AQMD's [program webpage](#). Additionally, a comprehensive list of eligible equipment can be found [here](#).

Fiscal Analysis: There is no cost to CVAG for this informational update.

ITEM 5C

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
April 9, 2026**



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Inland Regional Energy Network’s Business Plan and Public Sector Update

Contact: Jacob Alvarez, Program Manager (jalvarez@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Authorize the CVAG representative on the Inland Regional Energy Network (IREN) Executive Committee to 1.) support a suspension of the current policy limiting an agency’s concurrent Cash for Kilowatts projects, so long as it maintains the overall project cap and 2.) approve the Fiscal Year 2026-27 I-REN Budget

Background: CVAG is collaborating with Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) and San Bernardino Council of Governments (SBCOG) on a joint Regional Energy Network (REN), known as the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN). I-REN is governed by an Executive Committee, with CVAG’s votes represented by the Energy & Sustainability Committee Chair, or Vice Chair as needed.

Because the CVAG representative carries all three votes at IREN, CVAG’s policy calls for the Energy & Sustainability Committee to review key items before they are considered by the IREN Executive Committee in order to provide direction on the vote. With this staff report, CVAG staff is recommending the Energy & Sustainability Committee provide direction on two items that will be on the April IREN agenda. One relates to the Cash for Kilowatts program, and the other is the annual budget.

Cash for Kilowatts

I-REN’s Public Sector Programs offer no-cost energy efficiency support to public agencies served by Southern California Edison or Southern California Gas in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. This includes cities, school and water districts, special districts, and tribes. I-REN provides customized resources for strategic energy plans and efficiency projects to address unique implementation barriers. Additionally, the Cash for Kilowatts program offers a \$2 per kWh incentive for energy saved on qualifying upgrades, which helps local governments finance project costs.

On January 16, 2024, the I-REN Executive Committee capped the number of Cash for Kilowatts projects for each agency to ensure equitable funding and prevent rapid resource depletion. Agencies are limited to two concurrent projects (eight total), while counties may manage four at once (16 total). Initiating new projects requires the completion of existing ones, regardless of an agency’s capacity. This decision followed a discussion in late 2023 of different participation models, including one that would be “first-come, first-served” until the budget runs out, which could mean some agencies benefit more than others. At that time, the Energy & Sustainability Committee endorsed the current option to balance regional equity with the needs of larger well-funded agencies.

In an informational item at the February meeting, CVAG staff shared that the “two-projects-at-a-time” limit would be re-evaluated at the April meeting of the I-REN Executive Committee. This remains a priority for CVAG staff, as the current cap can restrict agencies ready to implement multiple energy-saving measures before the cycle ends on December 31, 2027. As of March 2026, these restrictions have

placed 37 projects from six agencies on hold, many of which involve facilities that must be divided into multiple projects due to complex meter configurations.

As of March 2026, I-REN has committed over \$1.1 million in Cash for Kilowatts incentives applications for 19 projects approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). These include Coachella Valley projects such as the City of Indian Wells and the City Palm Springs' fire station and public works yard upgrades. I-REN has identified an additional \$4.9M in potential incentives throughout its territory and is currently assisting agencies with those applications.

The I-REN Business Plan funding cycle concludes on December 31, 2027, with a \$10 million budget allocated for Cash for Kilowatts incentives. Unspent funds do not roll over to the next cycle, meaning any resources not committed through CPUC-approved applications by the 2027 deadline will be forfeited.

WRCOG staff is planning to recommend that the I-REN Executive Committee suspend the limit on concurrent Cash for Kilowatts projects, with the goal of ensuring funds are fully utilized before they expire. This change aims to maximize project completions within the remaining timeframe, as staff does not anticipate any agency exceeding their total allowable project count for the cycle and CVAG member jurisdictions would benefit from this policy change. With this report, staff recommends supporting this change and not removing the overall project cap for each agency.

2026/2027 I-REN Budget

I-REN was established as a collaborative initiative among WRCOG, CVAG, and SBCOG to address regional energy efficiency needs. The CPUC formally approved I-REN's Business Plan in November 2021, authorizing a six-year budget of \$65.6 million for program years 2022 through 2027.

Since its inception, I-REN has adjusted its budget and programs through CPUC advice letters to meet actual expenditures and regional needs. I-REN Executive Committee consideration is required to ensure full expenditure of allocated funds by 2027 and to align future budget requests with demonstrated outcomes and regulatory expectations for transparency and cost-effectiveness.

As of March 2026, I-REN is entering the final years of its initial funding cycle and staff is planning to accelerate activity across all sectors. The previously approved Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget reflects significant expenditure increases driven by matured portfolios, expanded public sector technical assistance, and high participation in Workforce Education and Codes & Standards programs. This trajectory continues with the Fiscal Year 2026-27 proposal, which accounts for higher contractor costs and additional staffing at WRCOG to improve compliance and delivery. Recent technical analyses have justified these budget increases based on documented regional needs and program outcomes.

The I-REN Executive Committee will be reviewing the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget at its April meeting. As of the writing of this staff report, details were being finalized. But CVAG staff will provide additional information verbally when the Energy & Sustainability Committee meets in April meeting. Assuming the projected increases remain reasonable and in line with current projections, staff recommends supporting the budget. This will provide IREN staff with guidance on resource allocation, ensuring continued compliance with CPUC directives and the achievement of regional energy efficiency goals.

Fiscal Analysis: There is no additional cost to CVAG for these items. Staff time dedicated to I-REN and the costs of the services of consultants are covered through the I-REN budget.

