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After reviewing the material that is available online and listening to the presentation last year from the Planning Team, I conclude that the County struggles understandably to meet the expectations set out by the CEC, to understand the suite of all renewables, to fully explore the various solar technologies excluding PV, and to develop a clear path forward. Further their work appears hampered by limitations not the least of which is lack of specificity from the State as to the energy transition and how it will be achieved.

Accessory to use is to a large extent left out of the current County dialog with a focus more on grid scale, commercial projects. More on that at the end.

As a result it appears to me that staff took a safe and slow default position while trying to show progress. They propose a focus on solar and a limit to two solar projects so as to learn from those two. As an aside, are these commercial solar or accessory to use? They also propose limiting storage to 100 acres. Further they accept limitations imposed by various zoning restrictions. Government appears most effective when it addresses limitations head on.

This is a problem across the country and to my knowledge no one has a blueprint for what to do. Staff is working on a very difficult issue. For example, how could we have embarked on an all electric (which includes hydrogen fuel cells) approach to transportation without a clear and concerted effort to improve the power grid?

I absolutely commend staff for recognizing that solar and wind are currently the best sources of renewable energy. Nothing else has surfaced as attractive to date without huge government financial contributions. However, even these require government subsidies. Further, I commend their understanding that storage is a necessary component. I do not agree that moving slowly is part of the answer. The County General Plan has numerous references to the need for renewables and the need for urgency. Much of that language apparently came from the CEC as a directive to the Counties without a clear and achievable Statewide plan to make such an energy transition.

I would point out that counties across the country have struggled with the same things. However, they are now moving forward with the understanding that it is, in their words, time to walk the talk. It is time to facilitate a transition.

We might all agree the people of Ventura County want reliable, sustainable, and low cost energy. If we begin with that objective in mind allows us to construct a plan that works quickly in that direction. Our objective ought not to be simple compliance with e CEC directive.

I urge the Board to consider 1) setting objectives for reliable, sustainable, and low cost energy and 2) moving forward quickly towards more ambitious goals. Setting goals, providing resources, and creating a sense of urgency seem prudent next steps.

Specifically, why not encourage accessory to use as an obvious first step with a fast track process that installs power in a distributed manner throughout the County. This alleviates some of the power grid limitations we suffer from on our power peninsula, as staff puts it. I understand that the City of Oxnard is making the installation of solar, and possibly wind, an attractive investment. Use businesses to assist in the transition. They have business and technical expertise that can be leveraged. Lessons can be shared. And yes, as staff points out, learn from all those projects.

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