CALIFORNIA
BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GO-Biz Clean Energy Permitting Initiative

Local Permitting Playbook and Toolkit

October 22, 2025
12:00 – 1:30 PM

Webinar Q&A

Ask questions anonymously via https://tinyurl.com/GO-Biz-Question or via this QR Code:

AGENDA

12:00 – 12:10	The Clean Energy Permitting Initiative
12:10 – 12:30	The Playbook
12:30 – 1:00	The Toolkit
1:00 – 1:20	Q&A
1:20 – 1:30	How to Stay Connected

The Clean Energy Permitting Initiative

Drivers for Improved Permitting

Drivers for Clean Energy Development and Improved Efficiencies in Permitting Processes

California's Energy and Climate Goals

- California has set the nation's first state-wide target of reaching carbon neutrality and to decarbonize the state's electrical grid by 2045

Expected Growth of New Energy Resources

- 2025 | ~3,800 MWs
- 2026 –2028 | 17,000MWs

Tracking Energy Development (TED) Task Force

- Consists of GO-Biz, CEC, CPUC and CAISO
- Provides assistance for clean energy project development needed to meet state's reliability needs
- Information collected shows that long permitting timelines is one of the main issues delaying projects

Quick Fact

416 projects
28 Gigawatts

The amount of new large scale energy projects that came online in the past 5 years.*

**Tracking Energy Development (TED) Task Force, August 2025 Report*
TED is a Joint Effort of staff at the CPUC, California Energy Commission (CEC), California Independent System Operator (CAISO) and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to track new energy projects under development.

Amount of New Energy Resources

New Energy Resources Online

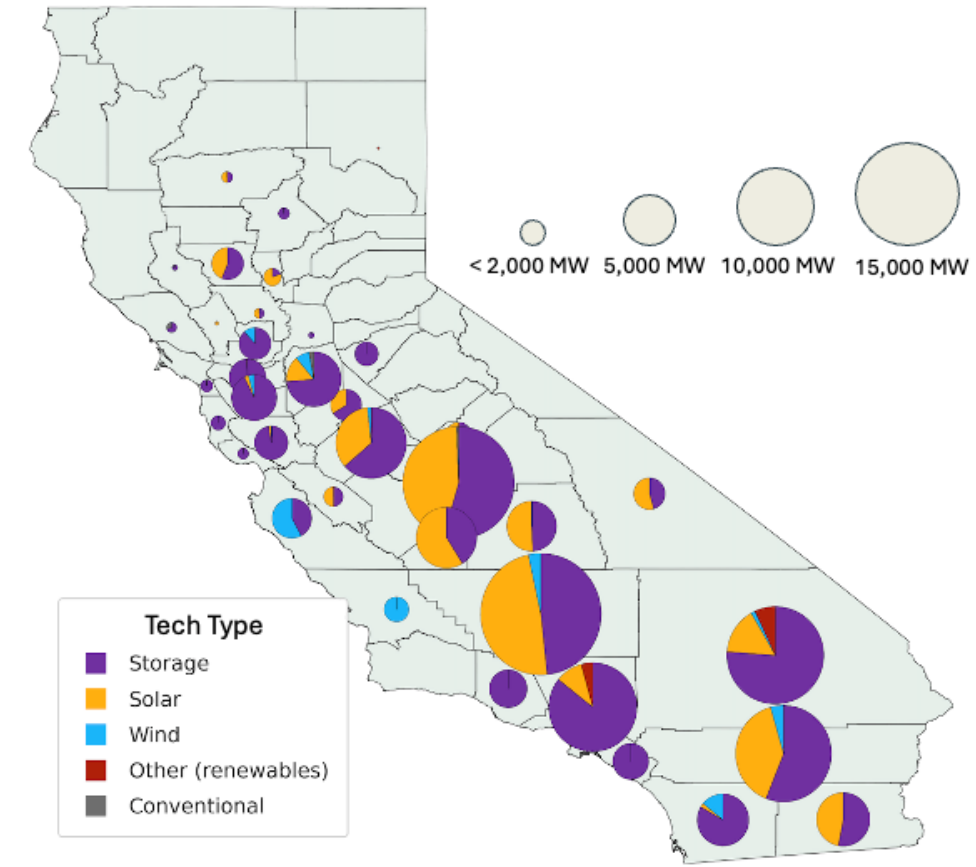
Data includes projects online as of August 29, 2025

New Resources Additions, January 1, 2020 – August 29, 2025, Cumulative

Technology Type	Nameplate Capacity MW	Estimated Sept. Net Qualifying Capacity (NQC) MW	Number of Projects
STORAGE	12,501	11,282	170
SOLAR	8,520	2,536	147
HYBRID (STORAGE/SOLAR)	2,165	1,596	28
WIND	1,128	260	23
GEOTHERMAL	41	31	1
BIOGAS, BIOMAS, HYDRO	42	0.1	12
Subtotal Total New SB100 Resources, IN-CAISO	**24,396**	**15,706**	**381**
NATURAL GAS, incl. Alamitos & Huntington Beach	1,551	1,487	19
Total New Resources, IN-CAISO	**25,948**	**17,193**	**400**
New Imports, Pseudo-Tie or Dynamically Scheduled	2,033	1,120	16
Total New Resources, including Imports	**27,981**	**18,312**	**416**

Interest in Clean Energy Development across California

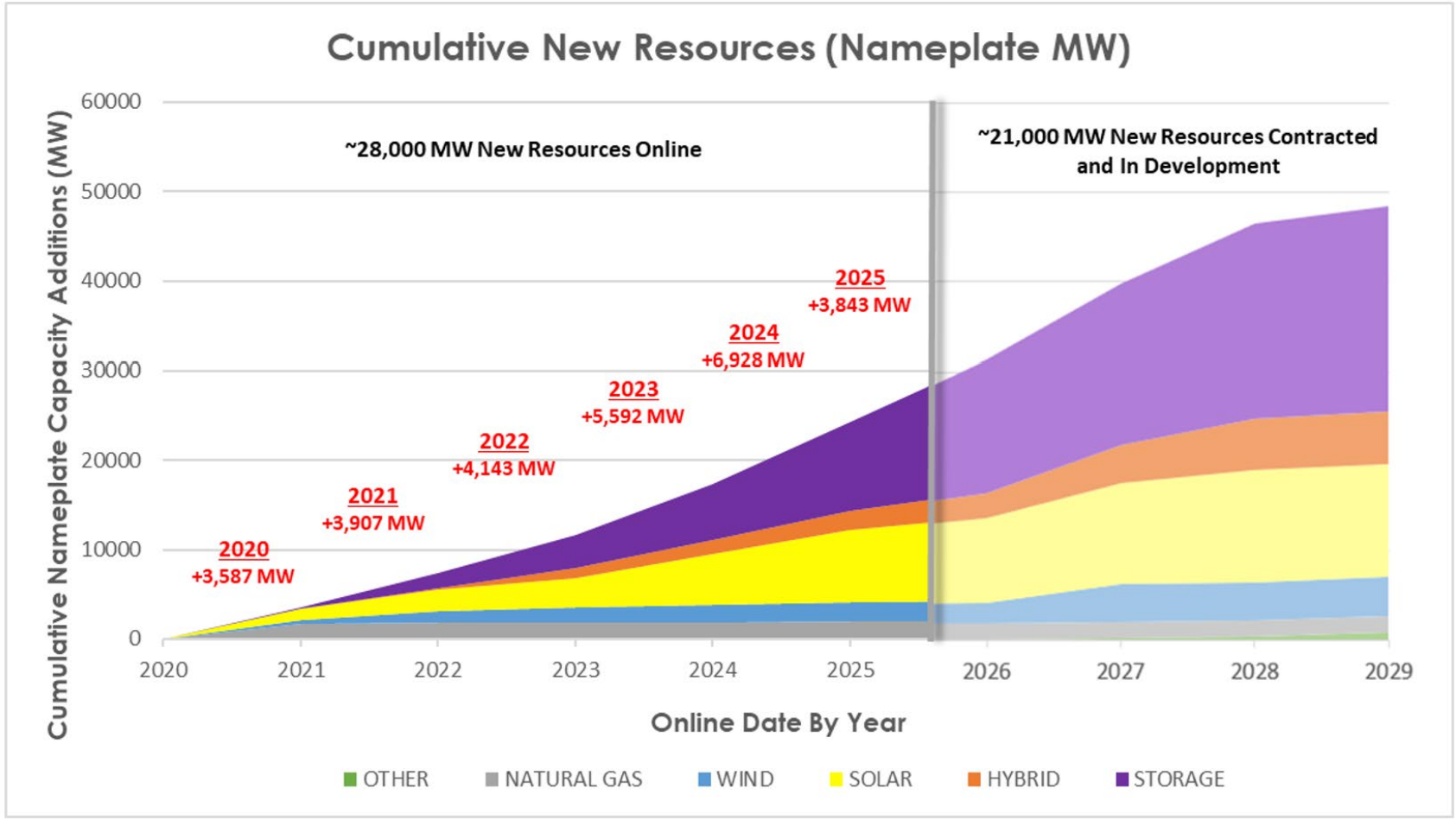
ISO Queue Map – Renewables, Conventional and Storage



- Developers have proposed new clean-energy projects that would more than double California's current power capacity on the CAISO grid
  - 207 GW *proposed* vs. current *installed* capacity of ~88 GW
- Interest in solar and storage is strongest in Southern California and the Central Valley
- Actual projects built will depend on factors such as permitting, financing and transmission availability
- Counties may also have renewable energy restrictions which impact project development

Contracted Clean Energy Development across California

CPUC Cumulative New Resources Online and Under Contract as of August 2025



21 GW of new resources in development

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California has installed record amounts of clean energy thanks to local efforts

Localities have proactively worked to:

- Improve and streamline permitting processes
- Create clean energy ordinances that incorporate community input and safety
- Include clean energy and resiliency into General Plans.

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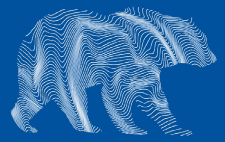
The Clean Energy Permitting Initiative

Playbook and Toolkit



Understanding the Local Permitting Process

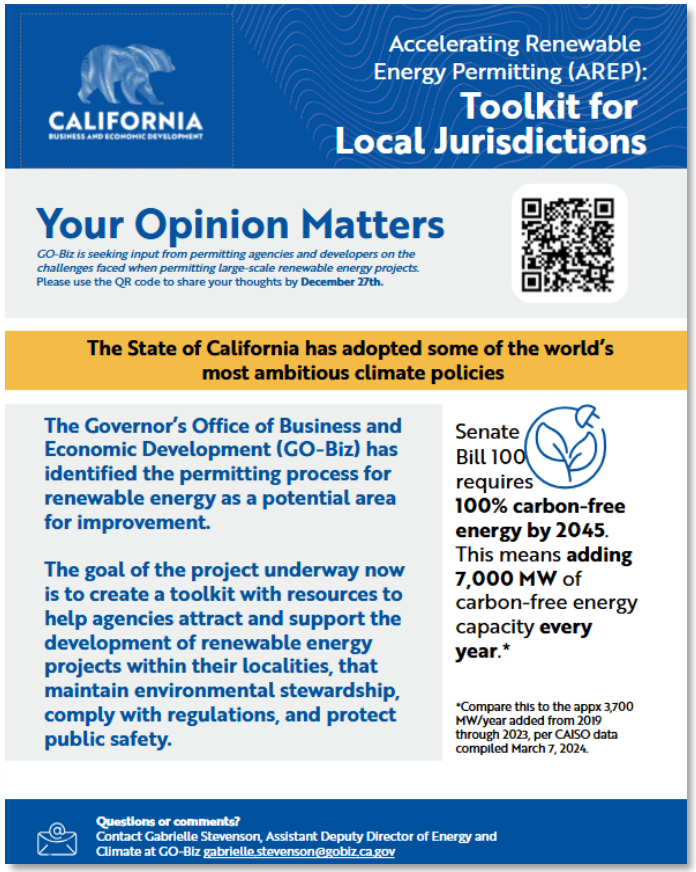
Stakeholder Engagement

Surveys, interviews, conferences, webinars:

- Over 300 individual touch points

Key questions:

- How do current permitting processes vary across local jurisdictions?
- What existing best practices or successful approaches can be shared?



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Accelerating Renewable Energy Permitting (AREP):
Toolkit for Local Jurisdictions

Your Opinion Matters

GO-Biz is seeking input from permitting agencies and developers on the challenges faced when permitting large-scale renewable energy projects.
Please use the QR code to share your thoughts by **December 27th.**

The State of California has adopted some of the world's most ambitious climate policies

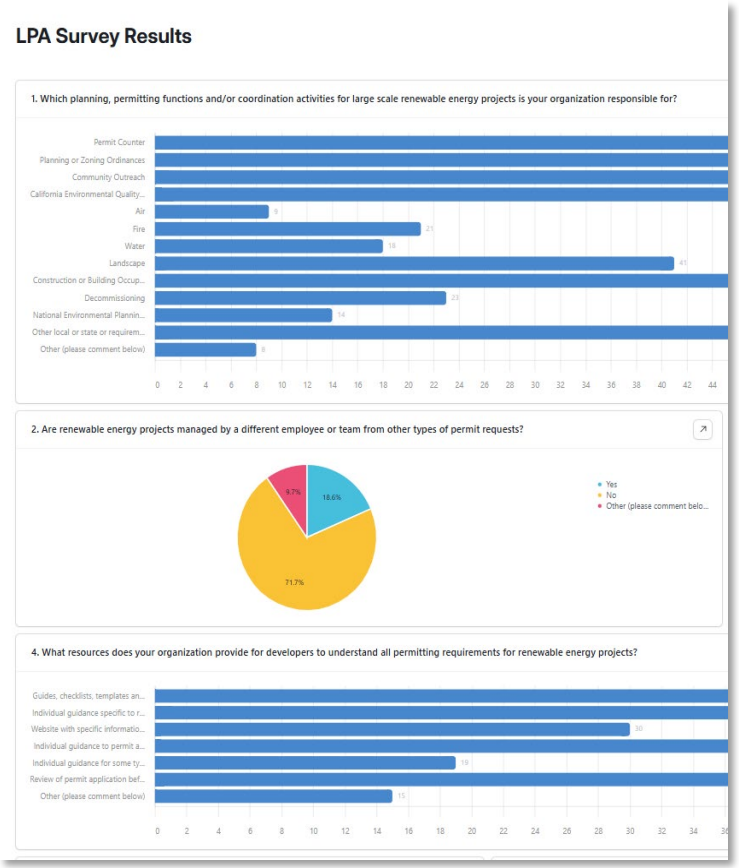
The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) has identified the permitting process for renewable energy as a potential area for improvement.

The goal of the project underway now is to create a toolkit with resources to help agencies attract and support the development of renewable energy projects within their localities, that maintain environmental stewardship, comply with regulations, and protect public safety.

Senate Bill 100 requires **100% carbon-free energy by 2045**. This means **adding 7,000 MW** of carbon-free energy capacity **every year**.*

*Compare this to the appx 3,700 MW/year added from 2019 through 2023, per CAISO data compiled March 7, 2024.

Questions or comments?
Contact Gabrielle Stevenson, Assistant Deputy Director of Energy and Climate at GO-Biz gabrielle.stevenson@gobiz.ca.gov



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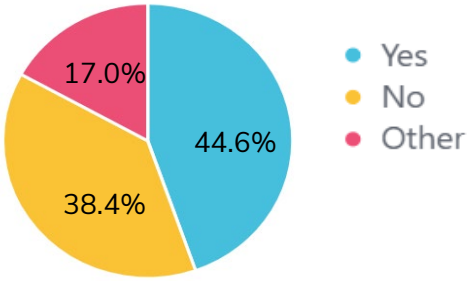
Permitting Processes - Findings

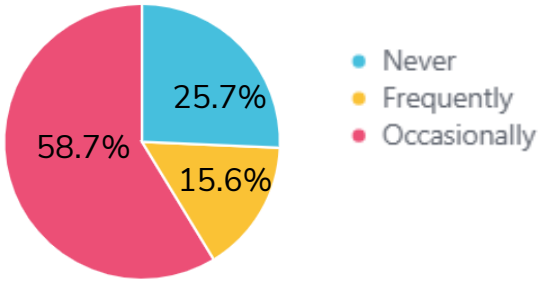
45% of planners feel prepared for the future

74% of developers report delayed permits

Is your organization sufficiently skilled & resourced to manage an increase in renewable energy projects in the future?



How often are permits delayed, and why?



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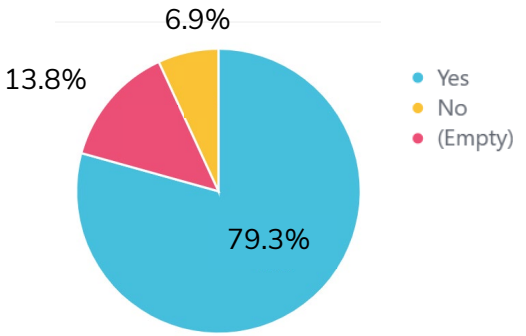
Permitting Processes - Findings

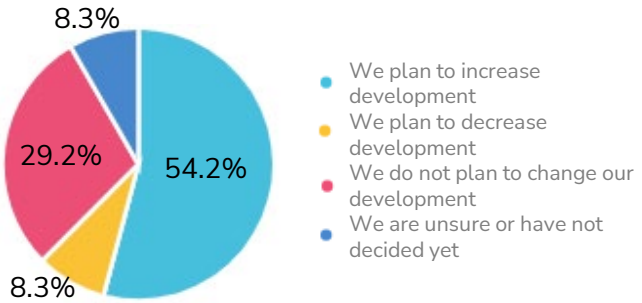
79% of developers consider permitting a factor to not pursue development

54% of developers plan to increase development

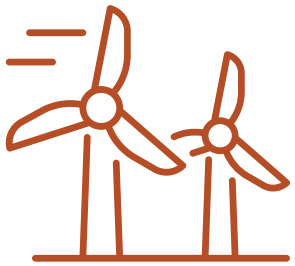
Has the permitting process ever been a factor to NOT pursue renewable energy development in a particular locality?



Do you anticipate any change to your company's involvement in renewable energy in the future?



Themes Identified to Accelerate Local Permitting



Understanding of the clean energy project development lifecycle

Clarity on the clean energy permitting process

Land use and fire code alignment – specifically BESS

Technology specific resources and fact sheets- media and education purposes

On demand SME technical resources & cross-agency “ombudsman”

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Playbook and Toolkit

Draft Complete

Playbook

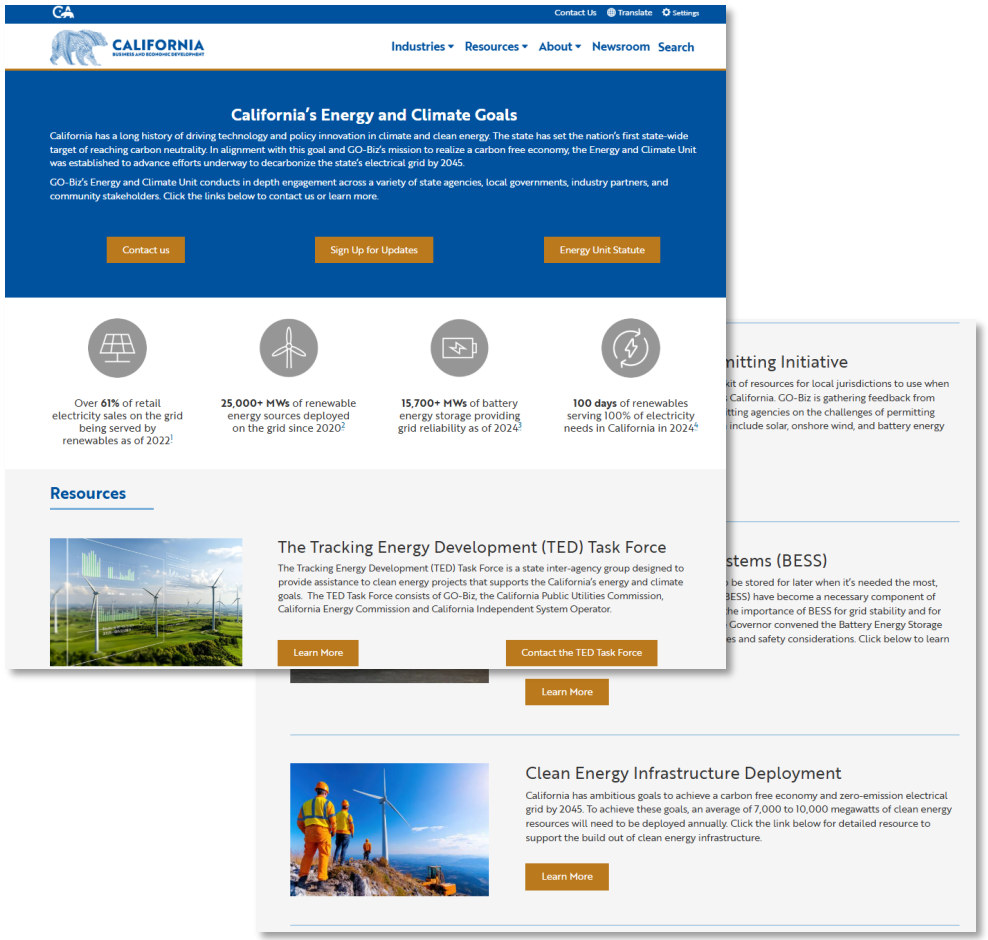
Understanding clean energy permitting

- California's policy landscape
- Clean energy projects and barriers
- Description of clean energy project development and permitting
- Local permitting initiative assessment and findings

Toolkit

Resources to assist in local permitting

- Permitting Application Checklist
- Model Ordinance Guidance
- Clean Energy Fact Sheets
- Aligning Community Interests with Project Development
- Permitting on Tribal Lands



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Playbook

Understanding clean energy permitting

Playbook and Toolkit

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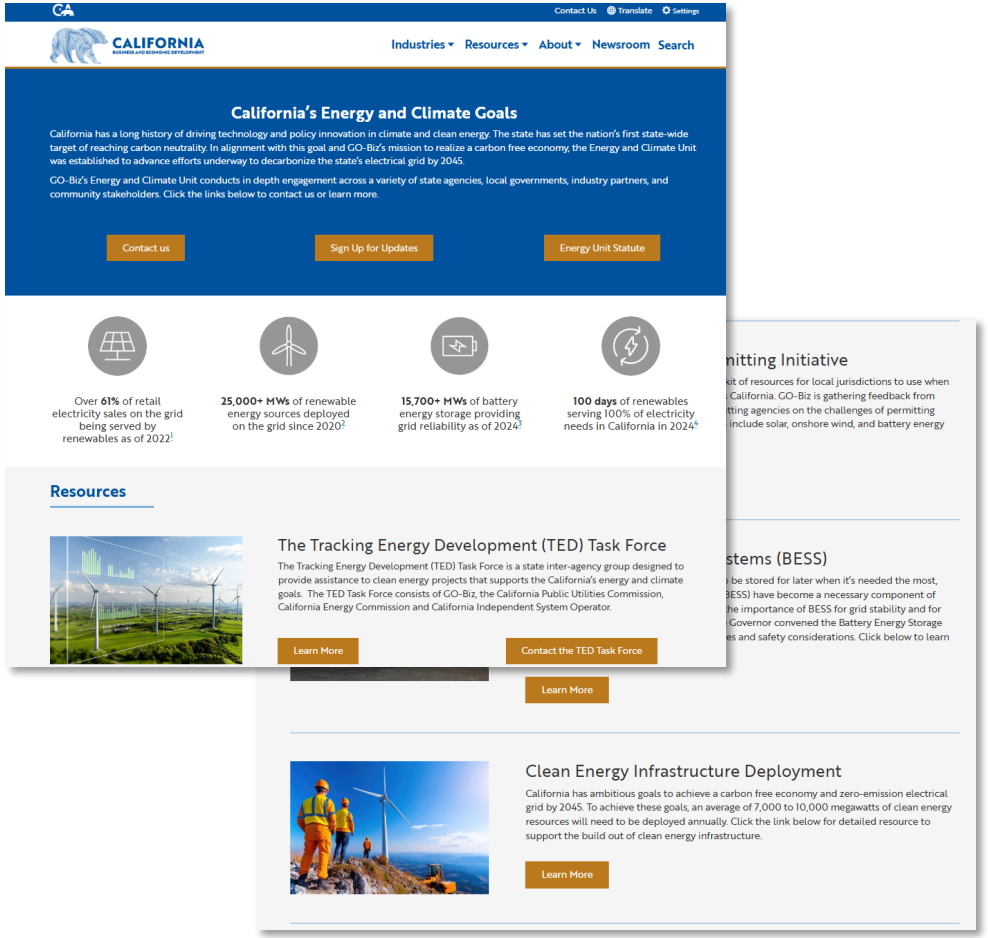

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Playbook Overview

The Playbook is a guide to local permitting of clean energy resources in California

Section 1
Background: California's Energy Landscape and the Local Permitting Process

- Overview of climate and clean energy policies and targets
- Drivers for improving permitting efficiency
- Overview of clean energy projects – operating and in development
- The clean energy project lifecycle and permitting process, including:
  - Pre-permitting activities
  - Environmental review
  - Community engagement
  - Project commissioning and decommissioning

Section 2
Permitting Initiative: Assessment of Findings

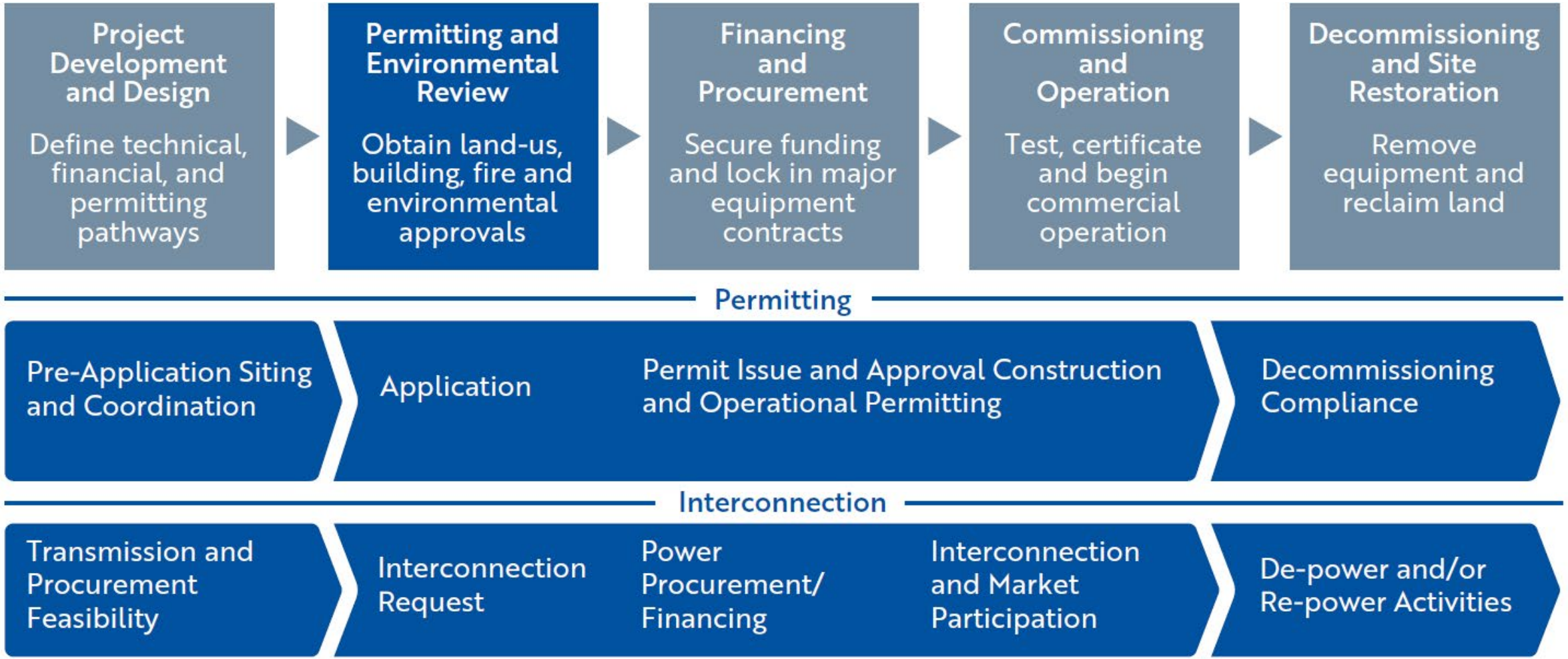
- Summary of permitting initiative project activities and outcomes
- Key findings from surveys and interviews
- Overview of the resources developed as part of the permitting initiative and identification of future resource needs

The Clean Energy Policy Landscape

At a glance

Policy Type	Applicable Law(s)
Greenhouse gas emission reduction (GHG) goals	AB 32 (Núñez, 2006) SB 32 (Pavley, 2016) AB 1279 (Muratsuchi, 2022)
Clean electricity goals	SB 1078 (Sher, 2002) SB 350 (de León, 2015) SB 100 (de León, 2018) SB 1020 (Laird, 2022)
Centralized procurement for long-lead time resources	AB 1373 (Garcia, 2023)
Consolidated permitting process for renewable projects	AB 205 (Committee on Budget, 2022)
Williamson Act and Solar Use Easements	California Land Conservation Act of 1965 SB 618 (Wolk, 2011) SB 1489 (Local Government Omnibus Act, 2022)
Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)	AB 1739 (Dickinson, 2014) SB 1168 (Pavley, 2014) SB 1319 (Pavley, 2014)

Clean Energy Project Lifecycle and Permitting



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Overview of the Local Permitting Process

- Agricultural Land Classifications
- Topography
- Historic Areas
- Grid Interconnection Feasibility
- Site Accessibility and Existing Infrastructure
- Community Stakeholders
- Title Review and Preliminary Environmental Desktop Study
- Ministerial and Discretionary Permits

- Environmental Review
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- National Environmental Policy act (NEPA)
- Natural Resource Permits
- Federal and State Law Compliance and Approvals
- Community Engagement

- Construction
- Fire Inspection
- Commissioning
- Operational Permits
- De-commissioning

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Accelerators identified by localities in the Local Permitting Process

- Clean energy siting feasibility maps
- Pre-application developer/planning meeting
- Land use compatibility strategies
- Site specific list of sensitive and protected species
- Permitting process documentation and documented timelines
- Clarity on downstream requirements (e.g. building, fire code) through meetings or other resources

- Permitting software comprising online validation, automation, calculation and e-signature features
- CEQA documentation technical assistance and coordination
- State and federal protected species technical assistance and coordination
- Clear communication of project benefits aligned to local economic development, community stakeholders and community impact
- Contact lists for AHJ stakeholders (i.e. local, state, federal, utility)
- Access to 3rd parties for technical consultation
- Efficient procurement/ approved consultant list for CEQA/ environmental review consultants

- Upfront clarity of downstream requirements (i.e. building & fire code, project end of life, project de-commissioning)
- Local coordination assistance (e.g. building, fire, electrical)
- Coordination assistance with applicable utility and system operator on commissioning requirements

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Tools prioritized for development

- Permitting Resources & Checklist
- Model Ordinance (in particular for BESS)
- Guidance on project benefits communication/ aligning community interests
- Fact sheets for internal agency and external use (general public and the media)
- Clean energy technology educational material/ handbook for planners
- Fire code overview for land use planners in ordinance development

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Webinar Q&A

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Toolkit

Resources to assist in local planning

Playbook and Toolkit

Draft Complete

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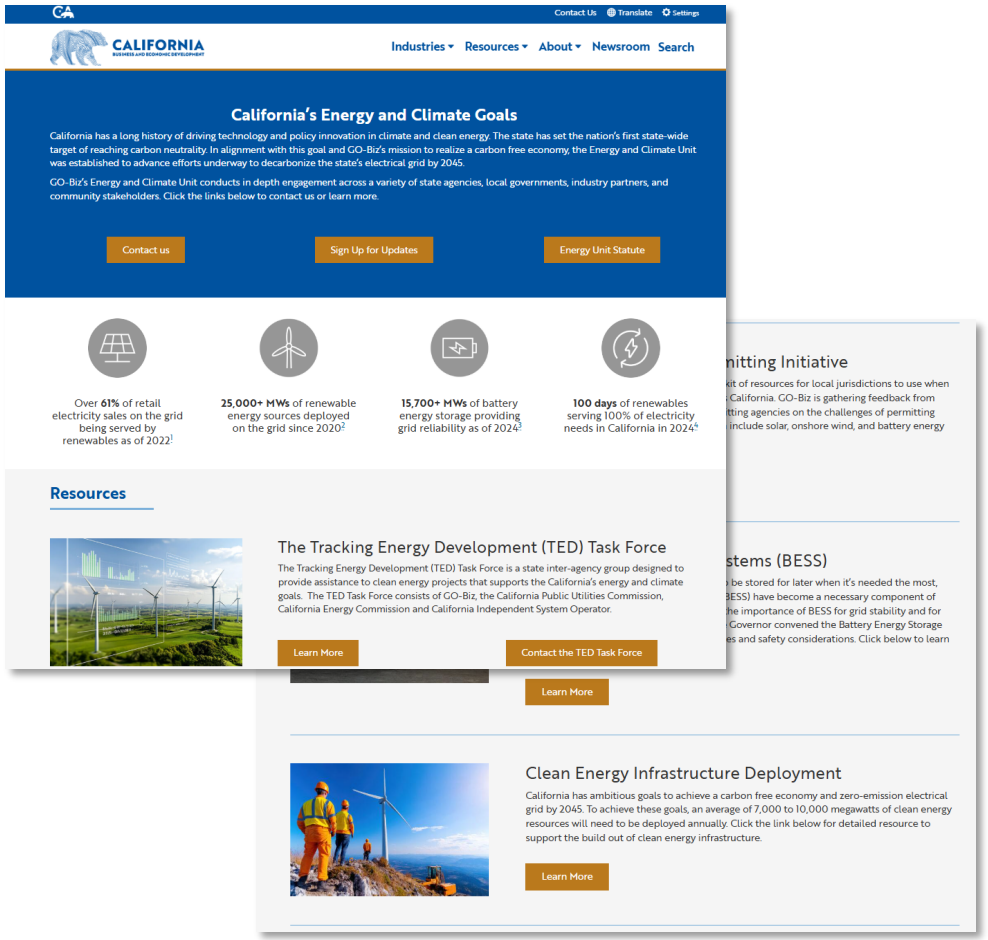

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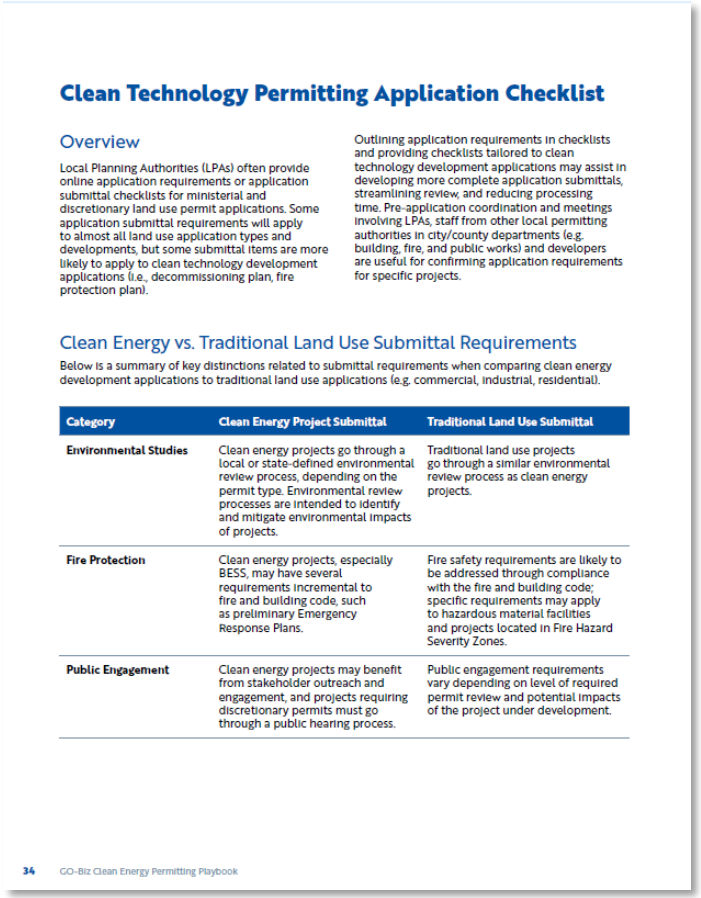
Clean Energy Permitting Application Checklist

LPAs and developers identified that **checklists** and **guides** would support a streamlined permitting process



Clean Technology Permitting Application Checklist

Overview

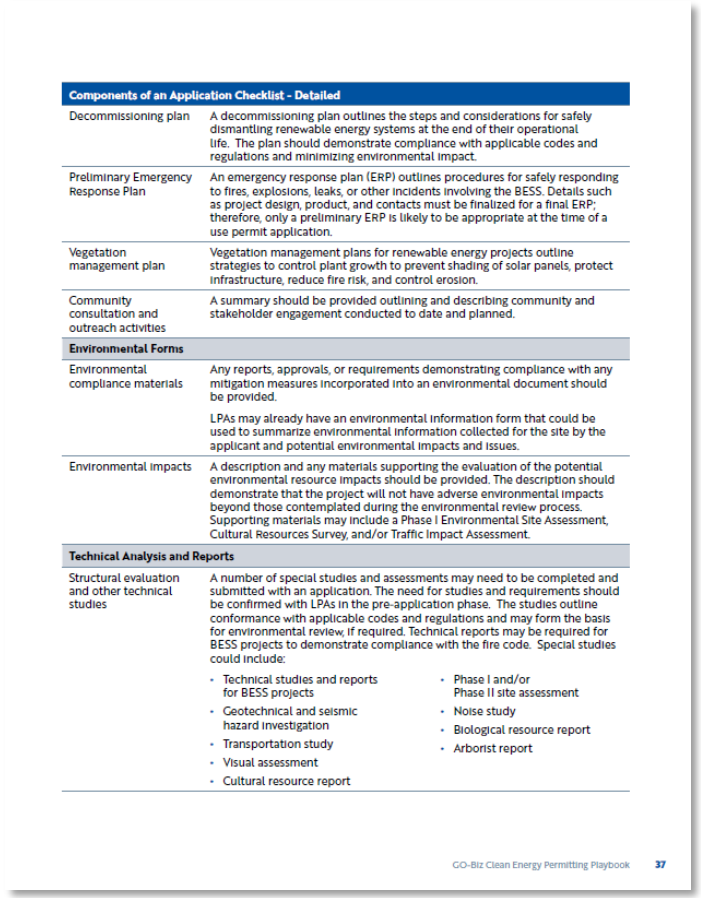
Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) often provide online application requirements or application submittal checklists for ministerial and discretionary land use permit applications. Some application submittal requirements will apply to almost all land use application types and developments, but some submittal items are more likely to apply to clean technology development applications (i.e., decommissioning plan, fire protection plan).

Outlining application requirements in checklists and providing checklists tailored to clean technology development applications may assist in developing more complete application submittals, streamlining review, and reducing processing time. Pre-application coordination and meetings involving LPAs, staff from other local permitting authorities in city/county departments (e.g. building, fire, and public works) and developers are useful for confirming application requirements for specific projects.

Clean Energy vs. Traditional Land Use Submittal Requirements

Below is a summary of key distinctions related to submittal requirements when comparing clean energy development applications to traditional land use applications (e.g. commercial, industrial, residential).

Category	Clean Energy Project Submittal	Traditional Land Use Submittal
Environmental Studies	Clean energy projects go through a local or state-defined environmental review process, depending on the permit type. Environmental review processes are intended to identify and mitigate environmental impacts of projects.	Traditional land use projects go through a similar environmental review process as clean energy projects.
Fire Protection	Clean energy projects, especially BESS, may have several requirements incremental to fire and building code, such as preliminary Emergency Response Plans.	Fire safety requirements are likely to be addressed through compliance with the fire and building code; specific requirements may apply to hazardous material facilities and projects located in Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
Public Engagement	Clean energy projects may benefit from stakeholder outreach and engagement, and projects requiring discretionary permits must go through a public hearing process.	Public engagement requirements vary depending on level of required permit review and potential impacts of the project under development.



Components of an Application Checklist - Detailed	
Decommissioning plan	A decommissioning plan outlines the steps and considerations for safely dismantling renewable energy systems at the end of their operational life. The plan should demonstrate compliance with applicable codes and regulations and minimizing environmental impact.
Preliminary Emergency Response Plan	An emergency response plan (ERP) outlines procedures for safely responding to fires, explosions, leaks, or other incidents involving the BESS. Details such as project design, product, and contacts must be finalized for a final ERP; therefore, only a preliminary ERP is likely to be appropriate at the time of a use permit application.
Vegetation management plan	Vegetation management plans for renewable energy projects outline strategies to control plant growth to prevent shading of solar panels, protect infrastructure, reduce fire risk, and control erosion.
Community consultation and outreach activities	A summary should be provided outlining and describing community and stakeholder engagement conducted to date and planned.
Environmental Forms	
Environmental compliance materials	Any reports, approvals, or requirements demonstrating compliance with any mitigation measures incorporated into an environmental document should be provided. LPAs may already have an environmental information form that could be used to summarize environmental information collected for the site by the applicant and potential environmental impacts and issues.
Environmental impacts	A description and any materials supporting the evaluation of the potential environmental resource impacts should be provided. The description should demonstrate that the project will not have adverse environmental impacts beyond those contemplated during the environmental review process. Supporting materials may include a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Cultural Resources Survey, and/or Traffic Impact Assessment.
Technical Analysis and Reports	
Structural evaluation and other technical studies	A number of special studies and assessments may need to be completed and submitted with an application. The need for studies and requirements should be confirmed with LPAs in the pre-application phase. The studies outline conformance with applicable codes and regulations and may form the basis for environmental review, if required. Technical reports may be required for BESS projects to demonstrate compliance with the fire code. Special studies could include: • Technical studies and reports for BESS projects • Geotechnical and seismic hazard investigation • Transportation study • Visual assessment • Cultural resource report • Phase I and/or Phase II site assessment • Noise study • Biological resource report • Arborist report

Reviews **key differences** between **traditional** and **clean energy** project applications for land use:

- Environmental studies
- Fire protection
- Public engagement

References **sample application checklists** from CA counties

Outlines and describes **components of an application checklist**

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Model Ordinances and Guides

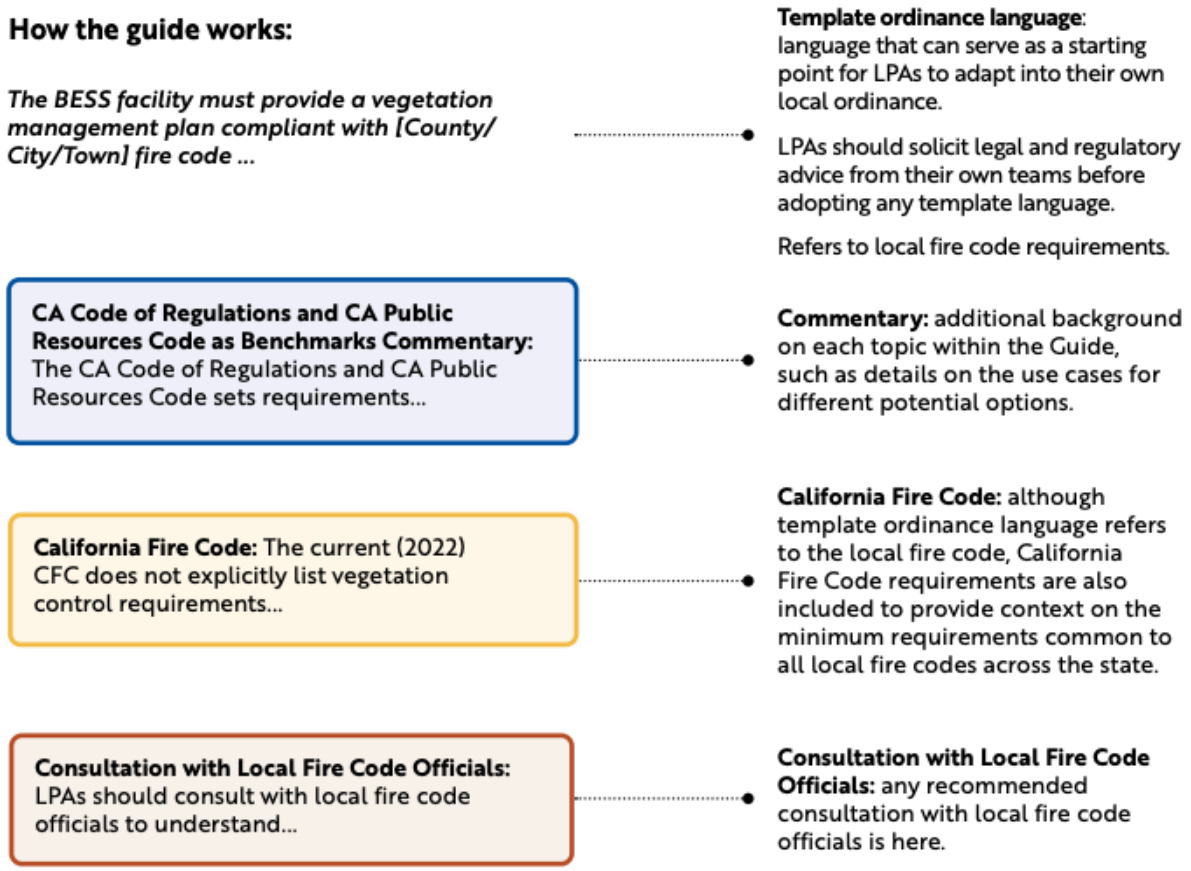
Model ordinances were a **top request** from LPAs and developers

Land use ordinances are adopted by a city, town, or county to govern how land can be used and developed

The Model Ordinance is a **template that can be used and adapted** by LPAs for their own ordinances

- LPAs are **not** required to adopt any components of the model ordinance

Also provides **technical information** and how that information can be considered to promote safety while facilitating responsible development

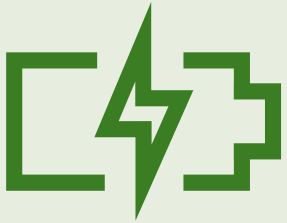


Key Topics Covered in Ordinance and Guide

Topic Area	Key Questions Answered
Applicability	In what situations should this ordinance be applied?
Permit Types	What is the appropriate permit type for each different zoning district?
Application Requirements	What documentation should developers submit to local planning authorities to produce a "complete" application?
Design Standards (BESS Setbacks)	What is an appropriate setback for BESS to ensure the safety of nearby populations and structures?
Design Standards (Solar and Wind)	What are the appropriate setbacks and height limits to ensure that projects can operate safely and minimize disturbance?
Fire Safety	What are the appropriate fire safety requirements for a BESS?
Permitting, Safety, and Environmental Compliance	What additional standards are appropriate to mitigate safety risks and environmental impacts?
Decommissioning	How should developers assure that there will be funding available to restore sites to their previous condition once projects are dismantled at the end of their useful life?
Additional Considerations	What additional considerations might LPA make when developing ordinances tailored to their specific needs and preferences?

Model Ordinances and Guides: Technology Specific Considerations

BESS

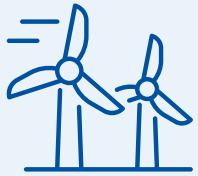


- Provides detail on fire safety requirements
  - Setbacks are one of the primary tools used in land use ordinances to promote safety
    - The Guide provides 3 options for setbacks and discusses when each may be applicable
  - Clarifies which analyses and tests should be included in a use ordinance versus are covered in a construction permit
- References the California Fire Code and emphasizes the importance of consulting local fire code officials

Solar

- Setbacks promote safety and minimize visual and aesthetic impacts
- Decommissioning requirements ensure that the land is restored to its pre-project state

Wind



- Height limits ensure safety and minimize disturbances

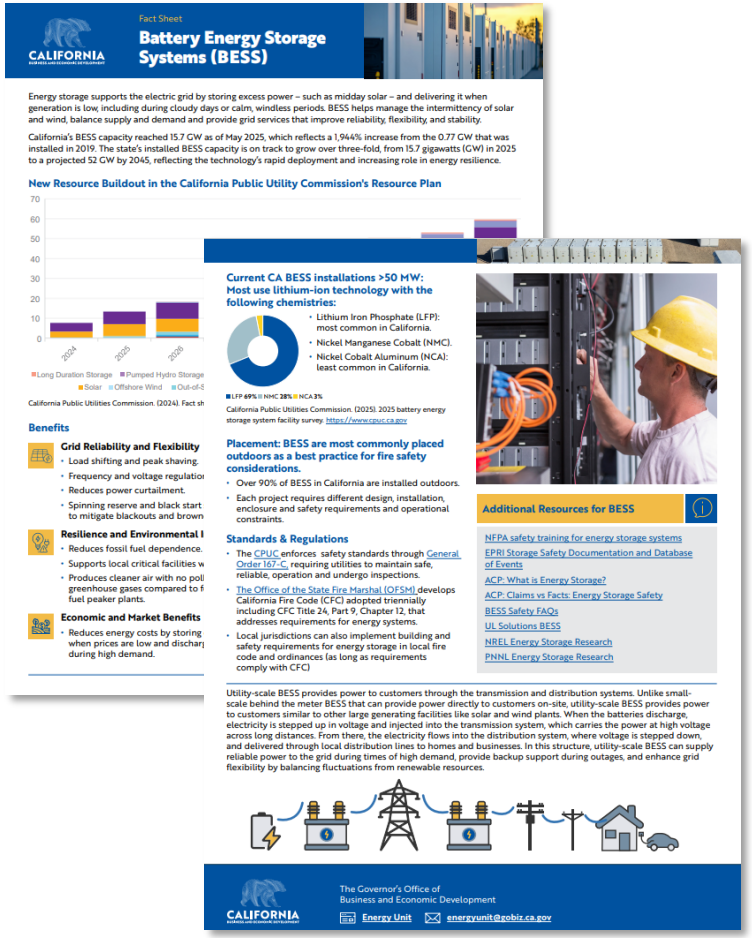
Clean Energy Fact Sheets

Resources to support community engagement were requested by LPAs and developers to help educate local communities

2-page fact sheets for each technology are intended to improve public understanding.

Provides accessible information on:

- The clean energy technology (solar, wind, BESS)
- Role of technology in reaching California's policy goals
- Benefits
- Potential impacts and considerations



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Clean Energy Fact Sheets

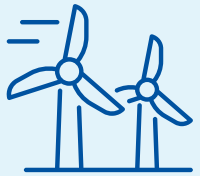
Solar

Key Focus: Land Use & Compatibility

Topics include:

- Agricultural and dual-use opportunities (agrivoltaics)
- Visual impacts and glare mitigation
- Dust control on fallowed land
- CEQA/environmental review considerations

Wind

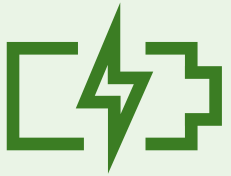


Key Focus: Wildlife & Visual Impacts

Topics include:

- Habitat and species protection under CEQA
- Local noise and visual design standards
- Agricultural co-location potential
- Myths vs. facts about health and safety

BESS



Key Focus: Fire Safety & Reliability

Topics include:

- Battery types and chemistries
- Fire code coordination and safety standards
- Site placement and emergency access

Aligning Community Interests with Clean Energy Project Development

This guide aims to provide practical context to help LPAs understand the benefits that clean energy projects might offer local communities and tradeoffs between options.

Beneficial Impacts of Clean Energy Projects

- New jobs and local business opportunities
- Cleaner air and reduced pollution
- Local tax revenue
- Improvements on agricultural or underused land

Negotiated Benefits

- Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs): legally binding commitments between developers and community groups
- Project Labor Agreements (PLAs): partnerships with labor unions for fair wages and local hiring
- Ad hoc or voluntary benefits

Communication of Benefits

- Share information early, clearly, and widely
- Partner with community-based organizations to reach residents
- Provide transparent, quantitative details on taxes, jobs, and local improvements

Permitting on Tribal Lands

Clean energy development on tribal lands in CA to date has been limited, but is **growing**

This resource offers **guidance on permitting clean energy projects on tribal lands** and **outlines how the permitting process may vary** depending on

- Tribal recognition status
- Land trusts

Reviews consultation protocols

- Consultations are **critical for addressing cultural, historical, and ecological resource considerations**

California Tribal Lands (EPA, 2011)

Documents posted on GO-Biz Website for Feedback

Public Feedback for the Playbook and Toolkit

GO-Biz looks forward to hearing your comments on the resources that will be included in the final Clean Energy Permitting Playbook and Toolkit. The team spent several months surveying, interviewing, and conducting focus groups to understand challenges and pain points of the local permitting process for large-scale clean energy projects as well as opportunities for improvement. Based on input and feedback from stakeholders, we have developed draft resources to assist with permitting processes.

Draft Documents – Clean Energy Permitting Playbook and Toolkit

Below are the draft documents of the Clean Energy Permitting Playbook and Toolkit. Click on each resource to download and review.

Playbook

- GO-Biz Clean Energy Permitting Playbook

Toolkit

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Fact Sheet
- Onshore Wind Fact Sheet
- Utility Scale Solar Fact Sheet
- Clean Energy Permitting Check List
- Aligning Community Interests with Clean Energy Project Development
- Tribal Considerations
- BESS Model Ordinance and Guidance
- Onshore Wind Model Ordinance and Guidance
- Utility Scale Solar Model Ordinance and Guidance

Submitting Comments

GO-Biz is accepting comments to the above draft documents through November 21, 2025. For those who would like to provide feedback to be considered before publishing the final Playbook and Toolkit:

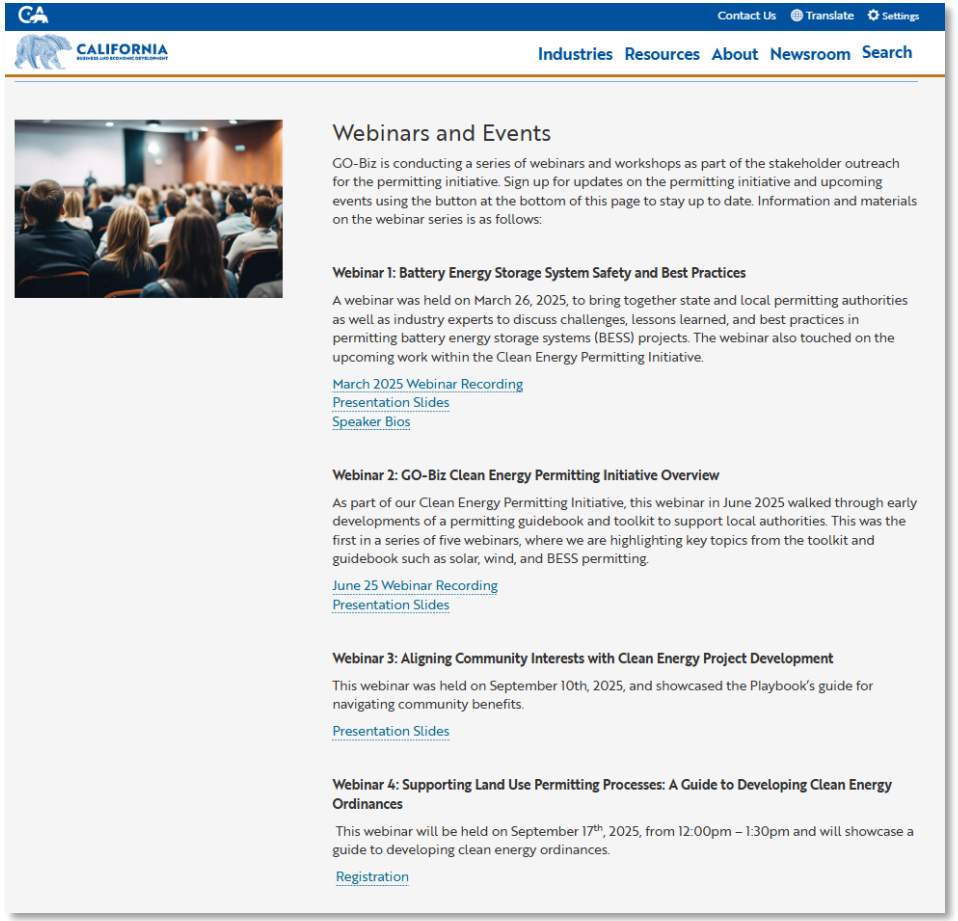
- Please send your comments to energyunit@gobiz.ca.gov no later than November 21, 2025.
- Include your name, organization, contact information, and which section of the Playbook and Toolkit your comments are directed to.

Webinar 5: Walkthrough of the Draft Clean Energy Permitting Playbook and Toolkit

GO-Biz will be hosting a final webinar on October 22, 2025 from 12pm-1:30pm to take a walkthrough of the draft Clean Energy Permitting Playbook and Toolkit documents. Click below to register!

- Registration

For further questions on submitting feedback or about the initiative in general, please reach out to energyunit@gobiz.ca.gov.



- Provide feedback on content by **November 21, 2025**
- View recordings and presentation slides from past webinars on this initiative

Ask questions anonymously via https://tinyurl.com/GO-Biz-Question or via this QR Code:.

Webinar Q&A

Ask questions anonymously via https://tinyurl.com/GO-Biz-Question or via this QR Code:

How to Stay Connected

Email

Contact for any questions or to schedule a briefing:
energyunit@gobiz.ca.gov

https://business.ca.gov/industries/climate-and-clean-energy/go-biz-renewable-energy-permitting-initiative/
Provide feedback by November 21st 2025

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Thank you to our contributors

- American Clean Power (ACP)
- Alameda City
- Alameda County
- Alhambra City
- Amador County
- Arevon Energy
- Aypa Power
- Beaumont City
- Bell Gardens City
- Benicia City
- Berkeley City
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
- Buena Park City
- Burlingame City
- Butte County
- California Department of Forestry
- and Fire Protection
- California Energy Storage Alliance (CESA)
- California Energy Commission (CEC)
- California Independent System Operator (CAISO)
- California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
- California Natural Resources Agency
- California Solar & Storage Association (CALSSA)
- California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
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- Robinson Rancheria
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- Sacramento County
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- and Monterey Counties
- San Bernardino County
- San Diego City
- San Diego County
- San Diego County Fire Authority
- San Joaquin County
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- Stanislaus County
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- Ventura County
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- Xolon Salinan Tribe
- Yak Tityu Tityu Yak Tilhini
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- Yreka City
- Yuba County

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Thank you