



GO-Biz Clean Energy Permitting Toolkit

Clean Technology Permitting Application Checklist

This resource is part of the 2025 Clean Energy Permitting Playbook, which offers guidance and tools to help accelerate clean energy projects in California. Visit the GO-Biz Clean Energy Permitting website for the full Playbook and Toolkit.



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

Table 1 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).

Table 1. Summary of key distinctions related to submittal requirements

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.

Coordinating Land Use and Fire Code Review

Local planning authorities should consult with local fire code officials when reviewing clean energy projects. Planners bring expertise on zoning, siting, and land use, while fire officials ensure compliance with fire protection standards and department response needs. Coordinated review allows agencies to identify requirements for equipment certification and testing, emergency access and response planning, and other fire safety measures. This joint approach helps resolve potential conflicts and enables projects to meet both planning and safety objectives. Model ordinances combining land use and fire code consideration is provided in this Toolkit.

Sample Application Checklists

The following are examples of process documentation provided by localities to aid in permitting.



County of San Diego

[Applicant's Guide to Major Use Permits, Modifications and Minor Deviations](#)

This Applicant's Guide provides comprehensive instructions for individuals seeking Major Use Permits, Modifications, or Minor Deviations in San Diego County. It outlines the purpose of use permits, the application process, required documents, and considerations for approval. The guide allows applicants to understand the process, requirements, and criteria for approval, helping streamline applications and avoid delays.

[Application for an Environmental Initial Study](#)

This Application for an Environmental Initial Study (AEIS) is a comprehensive form used by the County of San Diego to assess the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects that have not been previously reviewed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).



County of San Luis Obispo

[Conditional Use Permit / Coastal Development Plan](#)

A Conditional Use Permit, and Coastal Development Plan, is a discretionary permit that must be issued and approved by the Planning Commission to allow a specific land use. This site provides the 12-step process from 'Schedule Pre-Application Meeting' to 'Proceed with Entitlement.'

[Land Use Permit - Attachments Required for an Online Submittal](#)

This Land Use Checklist & Application Package offers comprehensive guidance for applicants seeking land use permits in San Luis Obispo County. It enables applicants to provide the necessary information and materials for an efficient review process. Specifically, this package consolidates required forms, fees, and supplemental information to surface application requirements upfront.

[Environmental Review](#)

This environmental review process supports the review of projects to identify, analyze, mitigate, and disclose their potential environmental impacts. This review process is conducted under CEQA, and when necessary, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This site provides the 6-step process from 'Environmental Determination' to 'Approve Determination.'

Kern County



[Instructions to Applicant Filing for Conditional Use Permit, Precise Development Plan, Modification, Temporary Event Permit and/or Variance](#)

This document provides detailed instructions and the application form required by the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department for various types of land use permits, including conditional use permits, precise development plans, modifications, and variances. It outlines necessary materials, fees, application details, and legal requirements applicants must fulfill.

[Environmental Information Form](#)

This form is designed to collect detailed environmental information from applicants on development projects. It covers general project data, descriptions, environmental impacts, and certifications to support environmental review processes.

Table 2 outlines the core components of an application that can serve as the basis of an application checklist. Local planners may choose to require additional items in their application depending on their local application process.

The Model Ordinances and Guides included in this Toolkit can also be referenced for additional detail on application requirements for each technology type.

Table 2. Components of an application

Components of an Application Checklist	
1. Item	Description to include/consider in package
Application Form(s)	Provides project details, including location and summary; applicant contact information; landowner consent; etc.
2. Project Summary	
Project Description	Project descriptions should include: A. Narrative description of project B. Description of applicant, project owner and operator C. Total nameplate capacity D. Typical Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of key project components E. Electrical diagram detailing the system layouts and interconnection F. Property lines and physical features. Additional descriptions may be warranted for specific technology types. For example, a description of the maximum height of the solar modules may be warranted for a solar project.
3. Plans	
Preliminary Site Plan	Preliminary site plans should show the planned location of each primary structure, property line, setback line, public access road and turnout location, substation(s), transmission line, and any other structure within the geographical boundaries of any applicable setback.

Components of an Application Checklist (Continued)

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.

4. Environmental Forms

Environmental compliance materials	Any reports, approvals, or requirements demonstrating compliance with any mitigation measures incorporated into an environmental document should be provided. LPA's 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.

5. 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 LPA's 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
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