

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce the Inland Regional Energy Network, or I-REN, and allowing me to explain a little about what a Regional Energy Network is.



Benjamin Druyon
Program Manager - WRCOG

A little about me...

- Been in government for past 18 years
 - Started at City of Palm Desert as intern
 - Hired into business licensing
 - Worked with code enforcement
 - Worked with building and safety department
 - Promoted to Energy Project Technician where we started first PACE program in nation
 - PACE is...
 - Worked there for almost 10 years
- Moved to regional government (CVAG) to run the regional PACE program
 - Also involved with local government partnerships
 - Strategic plan grants
 - Benchmarking
 - GHG
 - Commissioning/retrocommissioning
 - Energy Action Plans/Climate Action Plans
 - Solid waste & recycling programs

- Community Choice Aggregator program
 - Began working with WRCOG and SBCOG to develop I-REN
 - Worked there almost 9 years
- Moved to WRCOG to run I-REN

Introduction

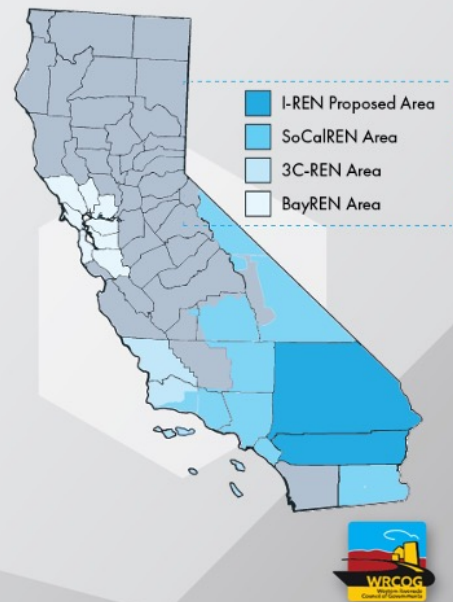
- What is a Regional Energy Network (REN)?
- What RENs do
- Why a REN in the Inland Empire?
- Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) –Sectors Explained
- Next Steps



Today I'll briefly touch on what a REN is, what they do, why we decided to create a REN, which sectors the I-REN will focus on, and cover some of our next steps as we begin our program's implementation.

What is a REN?

- RENs are coalitions of local governments
 - Created by CPUC
 - Achieve State's EE & Clean Energy goals
 - Program Administrators (PAs)
 - Access to public goods funds



Let's begin by understanding what a REN is. RENs were created by the CPUC. They are coalitions of local governments, and they are designed to administer energy efficiency programs, independent of the Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU's).

The State of California has ambitious energy efficiency and clean energy goals, so the CPUC was empowered to allow Program Administrators (PAs) to develop and implement energy efficiency programs to achieve those goals. To become a Program Administrator an agency

would submit an application to the CPUC to request access to public goods funds which are then used for energy efficiency programs. Examples of existing PAs are Southern California Edison and SoCal Gas, other RENS, and Community Choice Aggregators.

Currently there are 4 RENS in CA.

2012, SoCal Ren and BayRen became Program Administrators

2018, 3C REN formed – Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura Counties

2021, I-REN – 4th REN. Focus on the Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

What RENs do

- RENS are required to:
 - Fill gaps
 - Serve Hard-To-Reach (HTR) & Disadvantaged Communities (DAC)
 - Implement scalable Programs
- Example across the state:
 - Identify and implement programs in public facilities
 - Provide trainings
 - Develop pathways for workforce development entry and progression
 - Residential and multi-family energy efficiency program



A RENs purpose is to fill gaps in programs and areas that the IOUs do not want to fill or cannot fill with their existing portfolios. A REN also focuses on serving hard to reach and disadvantaged communities. As I mentioned before, RENs are coalitions of local governments, and because of their long-term relationships with their member agencies, it provides a unique benefit to distant communities and underserved communities. Another purpose of a REN is to create programs that can be scalable across the State. Some examples of scalable programs would be to organize Title 24 trainings, work with community colleges and universities to develop

educational pathways to train workforce, or to provide technical assistance for improving a buildings efficiency.

Why a new REN in the Inland Empire?

- Provide consistent and expanded EE programs to a region where COGs have long term partnerships with their 52 cities and Board of Supervisors from both Counties.
- Region is distinct from other Southern California areas, with its own robust culture and identity.
- Increasing impacts from climate is increasing the urgency and need.
- Member agencies have nearly a decade of collective experience and existing relationships from implementing energy efficiency programs locally for their constituents.



So why create a new REN? There are several reasons why a new REN could be considered. One big reason is funding. In the past few years, local governments have seen a decline in funding and grants for energy efficiency programs. The IOUs have been outsourcing energy efficiency programs to third party administrators because they are having trouble meeting the state's cost requirements. Another reason to create a new REN is the knowledge and relationship the local governments have with their member agencies will allow them to create programs that are tailored to that region or climate zone. An HVAC program created for the desert

climate may not provide the same benefits for a coastal climate. Another reason to create a new REN is for the increasing impacts of climate change. We are all faced with the looming threat of climate change, and a REN will help local governments and the state reach their energy reduction goals.



Now that we've heard some basics about RENs, let's talk a little about I-REN. I-REN was approved by the CPUC as a Program Administrator in November 2021. The CPUC gave I-REN a budget of \$65 million dollars for program years 2022-2027. I-REN will be focusing on three sectors, the Public sector, the Workforce Education & Training sector, and the Codes & Standards sector.

I-REN sectors - Explained

1. Public Sector

- Strategic Energy Planning - identify opportunities, investment in municipal and community buildings.
- Establish a Building Upgrade Concierge (BUC) services with digital and person-to-person technical assistance.
- Incentives for meter-based savings (Normalized metered energy consumption or NMEC) achieved over 3-5 years.

2. Workforce, Education & Training (WE&T)

- Work with local providers and schools, to bring comprehensive, equitable and targeted training opportunities to the region.
- Improve workforce development and help enhance availability of skilled worker and connection with businesses.

3. Codes & Standards (C&S)

- Develop activities to support C&S compliance and enforcement (training, outreach, and technical assistance).
- Focus on empowering and supporting local building department staff to be energy efficiency leaders in their own communities.



Within I-RENs Public sector we will work with our member agencies by providing technical assistance, becoming a point of contact for their energy efficiency needs, and provide incentives for reducing their energy usage. Within the Workforce Education & Training sector, I-REN will work with community colleges and universities to establish or improve on pathway classes offered and develop internship programs that will train local workforce and help place them in real jobs. Finally, with our Codes & Standards sector, I-REN will offer Title 24 training workshops to city building and safety

officials, industry specialists, architects, and any other relevant people interested in participating. We will also provide continued support and education to those seeking it through a website portal or app.

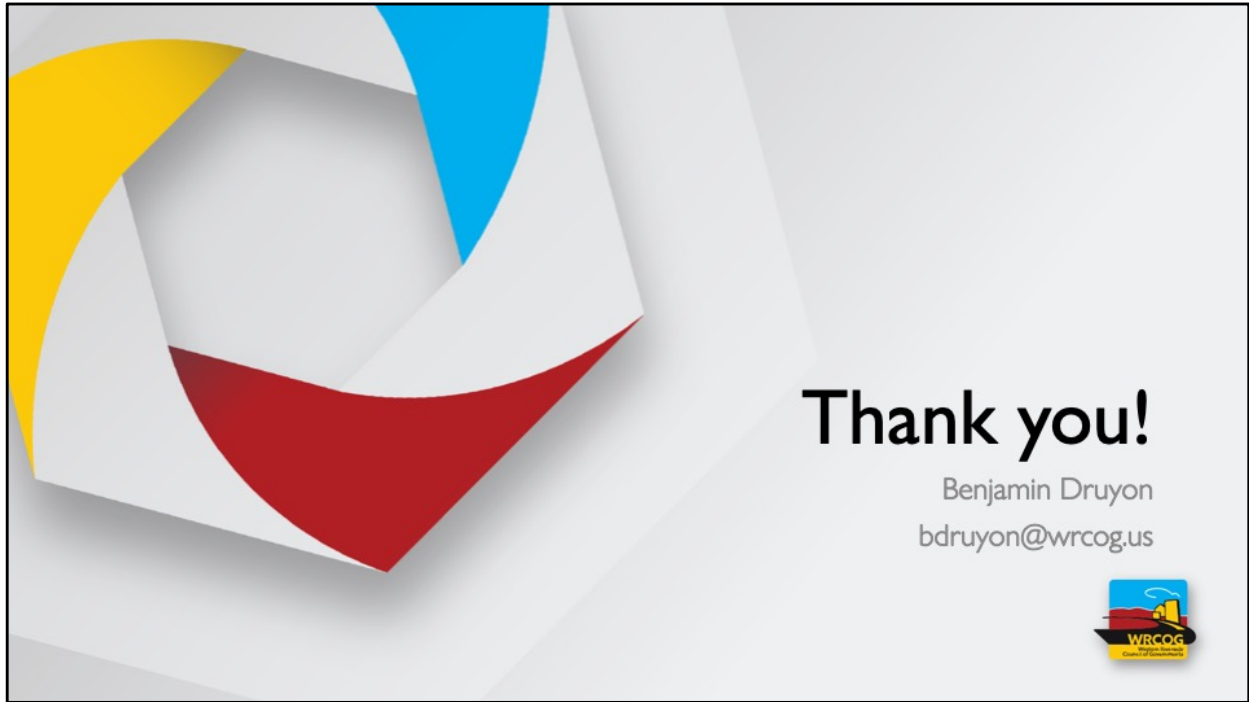
With each of these sectors, I-REN will form working groups made up of industry experts, specialists, and business professionals that will provide input and develop programs geared toward accomplishing the goals I-REN sets during its 6-year cycle. When I-REN begins putting these working groups together, we will be looking for volunteers and we may contact some of you to participate.

Next Steps for 2022

1. Development of Implementation Plan
2. Put out RFPs for sector specific consultants
3. Set up sector specific working groups
4. Begin developing programs



Now that we have been approved by the CPUC as a PA, we are required to file an Implementation Plan by July 1, 2022. In the next few months, we will begin preparing RFPs for consultants to assist us with our sector specific tasks. We will also begin forming the sector specific working groups as I mentioned before and once those are formed, we will begin developing programs which we hope to implement by the end of this year.



Benjamin Druyon
Program Manager
Western Riverside Council of Governments
3390 University Ave., Suite 200
Riverside, CA 92501-3314
Phone: (951) 405-6727
Cell: (951) 675-2326
www.wrcog.us/

"Respect Local Control... Provide Regional
Perspective... Make a Difference"