

January 24, 2022

To: Lake County Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Crandell (Chair), Supervisors Sabatier, Simon, Pyska and Scott. cc: Carol Huchingson, Anita Grant

Re Board Agenda Item for 1/25/2022 Geothermal Geozone

We are commenting on the upcoming Geothermal GeoZone discussion on the Board of Supervisor's agenda for Jan. 25th. After reading through the documents, we have a number of concerns.

As committee members for the Geothermal Element of the Master Plan, we are familiar with the history as well as many of the issues. We also worked with the county to develop the Geothermal Setback Ordinance 2379, which the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved in 2004, to protect the Clear Lake shoreline, ridgeline and Mt. Konocti from geothermal development.

Currently geothermal power generation in Lake County has been limited to the Geysers, but Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) hopes to expand the region for development "far beyond the foot print." In fact, we were very surprised to read a Jan. 10, 2022 article in North Bay Business Journal, which quoted Geof Syphers, CEO of Sonoma Clean Power, as focusing on "GeoZone opportunities ***across more than three-quarters of the land area of Lake County ...***"

<https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/article/article/north-bay-counties-consider-big-geothermal-power-expansion/>

Concerns:

- 1) The communities surrounding the Geysers have been forced to live with induced seismicity for decades. Additional environmental issues have included emissions, waste, groundwater contamination, noise, light pollution and water use, while subsidence has been a potential issue in other areas. The technologies may have changed, but the impacts are still unknown, and mitigations may not be successful.
- 2) The SCP proposal plans to do feasibility studies, with Lake County selected as the "proving ground." This is not acceptable to our community.
- 3) The program fails to provide concrete benefits to Lake County and its residents in exchange for being a test case. While the document suggests jobs, lower costs and potential electricity for Lake County residents, they also state that job creation could be filled by displaced workers from Central Valley; initial electrical costs could be higher; geothermal energy costs currently command a premium, and "potentially" Lake County residents could be served. These are not benefits.
- 4) The GeoZone collaboration does not offer Lake County a voice on their Board of Directors, as requested by Supervisor Crandell. The SCP Board of Directors consists of 11 elected officials from two

counties (mayors, vice mayors, council members and supervisors): Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Cotati, Sonoma, Sonoma County, Windsor, Cloverdale, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Mendocino County and Fort Bragg.

5) According to the documents, SCP has completed a preliminary assessment of publicly-owned, or county-controlled, parcels of land in Lake County that are promising for new geothermal development. As many of the county-owned parcels consist of public parks, before any commitment we are requesting the Board of Supervisors obtain that information. We also are requesting Dr. Glassley's characterization of geothermal potential and the appraisal of mineral rights ownership. This should be supplied to the public, so the residents of Lake County understand what is potentially at stake.

The documents should answer other questions we have, such as:

- Are there plans to drill into Clear Lake?
- Are there areas where mineral rights have been removed from the surface land rights? Would they be allowed to drill under those properties?
- Where are the areas being considered for geothermal development?
- What exactly are these new technologies, have they been used elsewhere? Is there fracking involved?
- What is SCP considering by "proactively identifying development barriers" and "seeking changes in policy to support geothermal development?"
- If Lake County were to join the SCP Power Plan program, how would that affect the GeoZone collaboration? What would the advantages be?

We know past drilling occurred on Mt. Konocti and the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site, as well as dozens of other locations, and would like assurance that development occurs outside the Geothermal Setback.

At this time, we do not see any clear benefits to opening up 75% of Lake County as a "test case" for new technologies, without knowing the full extent and consequences of the proposal.

We are requesting that the discussion be tabled until Sonoma Clean Power can provide the additional information needed to make any decisions, or conduct their own research in Sonoma and Mendocino counties to identify potential problem areas and mitigations.

Respectfully yours,

Holly Harris / Chuck Lamb - Clearlake Oaks