

Lake County Board of Supervisors – Policy Position Statement

Subject: Energy Policy Ad Hoc Committee Update – AB 531 & Geothermal Development

This statement is submitted in response to the Energy Policy Ad Hoc Committee update currently before the Board. It is intended to ensure that Lake County establishes firm, enforceable conditions before any geothermal development proceeds under AB 531.

Key Concern: Sponsorship and Governance Conflicts

- AB 531 was sponsored by Sonoma Clean Power.
- The Board must fully consider the implications of that sponsorship in relation to local decision-making.
- Any overlap between Board representation, advisory roles, or participation on Sonoma Clean Power governance structures must be transparently disclosed.
- If a Board member is seeking or holds a position connected to Sonoma Clean Power while also participating in the Ad Hoc Committee, this must be clearly addressed to maintain public trust.
- Public confidence requires clear separation between policy influence and project benefit.

Required Conditions Before Any Geothermal Approval

- Lake County must retain full local control prior to any state-level authorization under AB 531.
- No geothermal project—regardless of size (50 kW or 100 kW)—should proceed without adopted County-specific standards.
- Binding Community Benefit Agreements must be required for every project.
- Revenue-sharing must directly and measurably benefit Lake County residents.
- Full disclosure of all project locations, including proximity to residential areas and the City of Clearlake, must be mandatory.
- Comprehensive environmental, seismic, groundwater, and air quality impact studies must be completed and publicly reviewed.
- Noise pollution, industrial impacts, and long-term operational disturbances must be addressed with enforceable limits.
- Existing infrastructure deficiencies (water, sewer, roads) must be resolved prior to project approval.
- Emergency response and evacuation planning must be required in high fire hazard zones.

- Full public access to project maps, agreements, and timelines must be guaranteed.
- Long-term financial accountability must be secured to cover damages, failures, or environmental harm.

Position Statement: During this Energy Policy Ad Hoc Committee update, the Board has an opportunity to establish clear direction. Lake County must not accept disproportionate risk while external entities receive the majority of financial benefit. Without enforceable local terms and conditions, AB 531 creates a pathway for development that may expose this community to significant safety, environmental, and financial consequences. The County must act now to define those conditions before any geothermal expansion is allowed.