

22. Adopt resolution authorizing the General Services Department to apply for an Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) Loan, approve California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption, and take related actions ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: General Services Department

Subject: Authorize GSD to Apply for ECAA Loan and take related actions

Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

Formal Title: Adopt resolution authorizing the General Services Department to apply for an Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) Loan, approve California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Authorize the General Services Department (GSD) to apply for a \$3 million loan from the California Energy Commission (CEC) under the Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) program to fund the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and implement energy efficiency projects;
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing the General Services Department (GSD) Director to execute all necessary loan application documents in accordance with the Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) program;
3. Authorize the General Services Department to undertake all necessary actions to ensure compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and file any necessary documentation with the Clerk of the Board and the State, as required;
4. Approve California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption; and,
5. Direct the General Services Department (GSD) to return to the Board with the executed loan agreement, promissory note, and reimbursement requests for final approval before submitting to the California Energy Commission.

Executive Summary

The General Services Department (GSD) seeks authorization from the Board to apply for a \$3 million low-interest loan from the California Energy Commission's Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) program. The loan will reimburse the County's share of costs for installing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. The Board is also asked to adopt a resolution enabling the GSD Director to execute the necessary loan application documents and ensure compliance with CEQA requirements. GSD will return to the Board for final approval of the loan agreement, promissory note, and reimbursement requests prior to submission to the California Energy Commission (CEC).

Discussion

County Government EV Infrastructure

Electrification infrastructure is critical to achieving state-mandated greenhouse gas reduction targets outlined in the County's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). Transportation accounts for 70% of the County's emissions and expanding EV charging infrastructure will support the transition to an electrified General Services fleet, reducing the County's reliance on fossil fuels. This effort directly aligns with CAAP Objective 8, which calls for the elimination of fossil fuel use in the County vehicle fleet.

GSD has made progress in advancing EV infrastructure at County-owned sites but to achieve the scale necessary to support widespread EV use by County staff, additional EV infrastructure is required. GSD has secured a grant that provides a significant amount of the funding necessary through the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) EV Fleet Program. Under this program:

- PG&E funds the cost of the design, construction, and maintenance of "to-the-meter" (TTM) infrastructure at no cost to the County.
- PG&E provides financial incentives to offset up to 80% of "behind the meter" (BTM) infrastructure costs, capped at \$96,000 per project site.

EV charging infrastructure installations at the Emeline Campus, South County Government Center (500 Westridge Drive, Watsonville) and North County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz) will be partially funded by PG&E through these incentives, significantly reducing the County's financial responsibility at these sites. The collaborative effort between PG&E and the County provides cost sharing for the equipment and technical engineering necessary to support the infrastructure necessary to transition to an electrified fleet. As an added benefit, the EV Fleet Program includes rebates for medium-duty electric vehicles, helping the County meet its commitment to purchase 63 such vehicles by 2027.

However, installations at other key County facilities, such as the juvenile detention center (3650 Graham Hill Rd, Felton), main jail (259 Water Street Santa Cruz), and Sheriff's Office (5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz), are not eligible for PG&E support. The County will be responsible for the entire cost of these installations, necessitating additional funds to support these expenses.

California Energy Commission's Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) Program
The Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) Program, administered by the California Energy Commission (CEC), provides low-interest loans to local governments, schools, and public institutions to finance energy efficiency and electrification projects. The CEC is offering counties and cities the opportunity to apply for up to \$3 million in funding on a reimbursement basis for infrastructure costs associated with the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. GSD is seeking Board approval to submit an ECAA application for \$3 million to fund the installation of EV charging infrastructure at County facilities not supported through the PG&E grant.

Loan Requirements, Terms, and Application Process

To qualify for ECAA funding, projects must demonstrate energy savings, contribute to climate resilience, and comply with CEC regulations. GSD must submit a detailed loan application outlining the scope, cost-effectiveness, and expected energy savings of the project. If the application is approved, funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis, meaning the County must incur and document eligible costs before requesting reimbursement from the CEC. The project must be completed within five years from the loan agreement execution date to maintain loan eligibility. During this period, the County must submit progress reports, meet project milestones, and ensure timely completion of EV charging infrastructure installations to remain in compliance with the ECAA loan terms.

If awarded, GSD has up to 20 years to repay the loan at a fixed 1% interest rate, with an estimated total repayment of \$3.3 million or about \$165,000 annually. Repayment will be based on a surcharge rate assessed on the per kilowatt costs of charging an EV which is billed to County departments as they utilize the EV fleet. In the aggregate, cost savings is achieved through the elimination of fuel expenses and reduced maintenance

costs compared to combustion engine vehicles. Additionally, 10% of the loan amount will be retained until project completion, ensuring compliance with program requirements.

By applying for this loan, the County aims to expand EV infrastructure with minimal upfront costs, directly support climate goals, and position itself as a leader in sustainability and fleet electrification. Reiterating the recommended actions, this memo seeks approval to apply for the ECAA loan and directs County Staff to return to the Board for final approval of the loan agreement if and when the loan application is successful. It is anticipated that the CEC review timeframe for the County's application will conclude in September 2025. Should the application be successful, County Staff will return to the Board with final loan documents by December 2025.

Debt Advisory Committee Approval

In compliance with the County's Debt Management Policy, the ECAA loan application was submitted to the County's Debt Advisory Committee (DAC) for review and approval prior to submitting this request to the Board for approval to apply. The DAC, which includes representatives from the County Administrative Office, Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector, and County Counsel, ensures that all debt financing requests are thoroughly evaluated, meet policy requirements, and are in the County's best interest. The Committee has reviewed the financing terms, debt structure, and project alignment with County goals and has found that the loan application meets the financing requirements set forth by the DAC.

Project Scope and Timeline

The proposed projects to be funded through the ECAA loan include the installation of Level 2 chargers with displays at key County facilities. Site assessments and infrastructure designs have been completed for several locations. The County aims to complete all installations by 2027 to coincide with its fleet electrification schedule

- Emeline Campus:
 - 33 Level 2 chargers for healthcare, social services, and public access, partially funded by PG&E grant.
- North County Government Center (701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz):
 - 24 Level 2 chargers for fleet and public use in downtown Santa Cruz, partially funded by PG&E grant.
- South County Government Center (500 Westridge Drive):
 - 10 Level 2 chargers for fleet and public access in Watsonville, partially funded by PG&E.
- Additional chargers at the following sites:
 - Rountree Juvenile Detention Center (3650 Graham Hill Rd, Felton)
 - Santa Cruz Main Jail (259 Water Street Santa Cruz)
 - Sheriff's Office (5200 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz)

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires public agencies to assess the environmental impacts of proposed projects and ensure compliance with applicable laws and guidelines. The projects that would be included in the loan application have been reviewed for CEQA compliance and determined to be exempt. The Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be included at the time of application.

GSD will ensure full compliance with all CEQA requirements before implementing the projects, including filing the NOE with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. This approach enables the County to meet environmental regulations and responsibly

advance critical energy efficiency and EV infrastructure projects.

CAAP Objectives Supported

This project supports the following CAAP Objectives:

- Transportation: Electrify County fleets and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Energy: Integrate EV infrastructure with renewable energy systems for sustainability and resilience.
- Government Operations: Enhance sustainability and reduce emissions across County facilities.
- Equity: Improve access to clean energy solutions for underserved communities.

Financial Impact

The total project cost is estimated at \$3 million, funded through a low-interest (1%) loan from the ECAA program. This amount includes the County's share of behind-the-meter costs at partially funded sites—Emeline Campus, 701 Ocean Street, and 500 Westridge Drive—and the full cost of installations at the Rountree juvenile detention center, main jail, and Sheriff's Office, which are not eligible for PG&E incentives. The loan will be repaid over 20 years, with an estimated interest of \$300,000, bringing the total repayment to \$3.3 million or about \$165,000 annually.

PG&E's contributions to "to-the-meter" infrastructure costs and partial funding for behind-the-meter infrastructure at eligible sites significantly reduce the County's financial burden. PG&E rebates are estimated to offset \$175,000 for chargers and infrastructure. The PG&E grant savings ensure the project remains cost-effective while advancing the County's climate and sustainability goals.

Strategic Initiatives

Climate Action - Energy, Transportation, Government Operations

Submitted By:

Michael Beaton, General Services Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

ChatGPT, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) large language model tool, significantly contributed to the development of this agenda item, including Staff Report, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz AI Appropriate Use Policy.



County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Planning (831) 454-2580
sccoplanning.com

Public Works (831) 454-2160
dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Clerk of the Board
Attn: Juliette Rezzato
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Project Name: Electric Vehicle Charging Installation

Project Locations and Assessor Parcel No: Countywide

Project Applicant: Michael Beaton, Director, General Services Department

Project Description:

The project involves the installation of Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) charging ports with displays at existing County facilities, enhancing accessibility to EV infrastructure. These installations will require adding a dedicated 208V or 240V circuit and circuit breaker. Charging stations will be installed on the ground and will be connected through a hardwired connection to the electrical panel, ensuring proper polarity, grounding, and adherence to technical specifications. All work will take place at established County facilities, with no expansion of use, ensuring compliance with local zoning and environmental standards.

The sites include:

- **1082 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 (APN: 00810116)** – Install 33 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **259 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (APN: 00832107)** – Install 33 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (APN: 00526125)** – Install 24 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **500 Westridge Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076 (APN: 00526125)** – Install 10 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **5200 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 (APN: 02902157)** – Install 4 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **3650 Graham Hill Road, Felton, CA 95018 (APN: 06137116)** – Install 10 Level 2 charging ports with displays.
- **1430 Freedom Boulevard, Watsonville, CA 95076 (APN: 01901707)** – Install 10 Level 2 charging ports with displays.

Agency Approving Project: County of Santa Cruz

County Contact: Tatiana Brennan

Telephone No. 454-3510

Date Completed: TBD

This is to advise that the County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors has approved the above-described project on _____ (date) and found the project to be exempt from CEQA under the following criteria:

Exempt status: (*check one*)

- ☐ The proposed activity is not a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.
- ☐ The proposed activity is not subject to CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c).
- ☐ The proposed activity is exempt from CEQA as specified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).
- ☐ **Ministerial Project** involving only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements without personal judgment.
- ☐ **Statutory Exemption** other than a Ministerial Project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15260 to 15285).

Specify type:

☒ **Categorical Exemption**

Class 1 – Existing Facilities

Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Reasons why the project is exempt:

The project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(2), 15301 and 15303. The project consists of minor upgrades to existing County facilities, including the installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargers, conduit, and related electrical infrastructure, with no expansion of use or building square footage. The exemption under Section 15303 applies as the project involves the construction and installation of limited numbers of small, new facilities and equipment, as well as minor modifications to existing structures to accommodate the new use. These activities represent minor alterations that do not result in significant environmental impacts. In addition, the County has determined that none of the exceptions CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 foreclose the use of Categorical Exemption Sections 15301 or 15303. Therefore, the Project is exempt from CEQA and no further environmental review is required.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title: Environmental Coordinator



BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 32-2025

On the motion of Supervisor De Serpa:
Duly seconded by Supervisor Koenig:

The following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR AN ENERGY
EFFICIENCY LOAN

WHEREAS, the California Energy Commission operates the Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA) program, which awards loans on a competitive basis to finance energy efficiency and electrification projects, including the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and energy efficiency upgrades at public facilities;

WHEREAS, the County seeks to install Level 2 EV chargers at various County facilities, including 1082 Emeline Avenue, 259 Water Street, 701 Ocean Street, 500 Westridge Drive, 5200 Soquel Avenue, 3650 Graham Hill Road, and 1430 Freedom Boulevard, as well as perform necessary upgrades to electrical infrastructure, including conduit installation, to support the charging stations;

WHEREAS, the County wishes to apply for a loan from the ECAA program to finance the project;

NOW, THEREFORE, that the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors authorizes the County to apply for an energy efficiency loan from the California Energy Commission to implement energy efficiency measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors finds that the activity funded by the loan is a project that is categorically exempt under CEQA. The project involves minor exterior alterations to existing County facilities, with no expansion of use or building square footage, as specified under CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(2), 15301 and 15303. Specifically, the project includes the installation of small new facilities (electric vehicle chargers), the construction of limited new utility infrastructure (conduit and related electrical work), and minor upgrades to existing public facilities, consistent with the scope of CEQA Guideline 15303. The Board further finds that none of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 foreclose the use of Categorical Exemptions in Sections 15301 or 15303. Therefore, the Project is exempt from CEQA and no further environmental review is required. The Board

Resolution 32-2025

further directs staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the Clerk of the Board and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

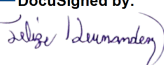
BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that if recommended for funding by the California Energy Commission, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors authorizes the County to accept a loan up to \$3,000,000.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the amount of the loan will be paid in full, plus interest, under the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement and Promissory Note of the California Energy Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Michael Beaton is hereby authorized and empowered to execute in the name of the County of Santa Cruz all necessary documents related to the loan and to undertake all actions necessary to facilitate the submission of the application and compliance with the program requirements, with the exception of executing the final loan agreement, which will be brought back to the Board for approval.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this 25th day of February, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Koenig, De Serpa, Cummings, Martinez and Hernandez
 NOES: None
 ABSENT: None
 ABSTAIN: None

DocuSigned by:

 300EB769DA614E4... 3/4/2025
 Felipe Hernandez
 Chair of the Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:  3/4/2025
 466B074E3141450
 Juliette Rezzato
 Clerk of the Board

Approved as to Form:

Signed by:

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 Full Name (MM/DD/YYYY, AMS)
 Office of the County Counsel

COB Rev. 8-1-22



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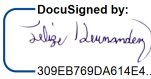
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At any time, you may request from us a paper copy of any record provided or made available electronically to you by us. You will have the ability to download and print documents we send to you through the DocuSign system during and immediately after the signing session and, if you elect to create a DocuSign account, you may access the documents for a limited period of time (usually 30 days) after such documents are first sent to you. After such time, if you wish for us to send you paper copies of any such documents from our office to you, you will be charged a \$0.00 per-page fee. You may request delivery of such paper copies from us by following the procedure described below.

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If you decide to receive notices and disclosures from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format. How you must inform us of your decision to receive future notices and disclosure in paper format and withdraw your consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically is described below.

Consequences of changing your mind

If you elect to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format, it will slow the speed at which we can complete certain steps in transactions with you and delivering services to you because we will need first to send the required notices or disclosures to you in paper format, and then wait until we receive back from you your acknowledgment of your receipt of such paper notices or disclosures. Further, you will no longer be able to use the DocuSign system to receive required notices and consents electronically from us or to sign electronically documents from us.

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Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through the DocuSign system all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

How to contact County of Santa Cruz:

You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:

To contact us by email send messages to: nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us

To advise County of Santa Cruz of your new email address

To let us know of a change in your email address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state: your previous email address, your new email address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address.

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To request paper copies from County of Santa Cruz

To request delivery from us of paper copies of the notices and disclosures previously provided by us to you electronically, you must send us an email to nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state your email address, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We will bill you for any fees at that time, if any.

To withdraw your consent with County of Santa Cruz

To inform us that you no longer wish to receive future notices and disclosures in electronic format you may:

- i. decline to sign a document from within your signing session, and on the subsequent page, select the check-box indicating you wish to withdraw your consent, or you may;
- ii. send us an email to nada.algharib@santacruzcounty.us and in the body of such request you must state your email, full name, mailing address, and telephone number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.. The consequences of your withdrawing consent for online documents will be that transactions may take a longer time to process..

Required hardware and software

The minimum system requirements for using the DocuSign system may change over time. The current system requirements are found here: <https://support.docusign.com/guides/signer-guide-signing-system-requirements>.

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To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please confirm that you have read this ERSD, and (i) that you are able to print on paper or electronically save this ERSD for your future reference and access; or (ii) that you are able to email this ERSD to an email address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format as described herein, then select the check-box next to 'I agree to use electronic records and signatures' before clicking 'CONTINUE' within the DocuSign system.

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- You can access and read this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure; and
- You can print on paper this Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure, or save or send this Electronic Record and Disclosure to a location where you can print it, for future reference and access; and
- Until or unless you notify County of Santa Cruz as described above, you consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you by County of Santa Cruz during the course of your relationship with County of Santa Cruz.