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Kehilla
Community Synagogue

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Subject: Integrate Community Recommendations for the Resilience Hub Initiative Under the SmartHome Battery Program with Ava Community Energy.

November 19, 2025

Dear Board of Directors, the Community Advisory Committee, and All Alternates,

The Local Clean Energy Alliance (LCEA) and our community partners with People's Clean Power Alliance share our sincere appreciation and excitement for the proposed launch of the [SmartHome Battery Program](#) introduced in the Executive Committee Meeting on November 5th, 2025. The SmartHome Battery Program, which includes the nascent Resilience Hub Initiative, is a promising start to build real, long-term community resilience for our energy-burdened, pollution-burdened, and historically disinvested communities in Ava Community Energy's service territory of both Alameda and San Joaquin Counties, including unincorporated areas and the cities of Stockton, Lathrop, and Tracy.

The proposal offers to invest roughly \$3.74 million into community resilience hubs with a strong upfront incentive of \$1,220/kWh for a prospective solar battery and ongoing incentive of \$3/kWh with required enrollment in Ava Community Energy's [Virtual Power Plant \(VPP\) System](#), providing a rough cost coverage of up to 80% of their solar and storage infrastructure within a five-year period. This solar and storage incentive is promising given the [current state of rooftop solar policies](#) and the devastating [funding cuts to clean energy](#) by the current federal administration.

[California's extreme heat](#) is impacting areas such as the San Joaquin Valley as a "silent killer," a costly and deadly climate change development that is reported to disproportionately impact low-income communities, the elderly, outdoor workers, including Black, Native American, and Hispanic Californians. The threat of local sea level rise, extreme storms, and risk of flooding in the Bay Area – which would endanger hundreds of thousands of Bay Area residents, billions of dollars of economic activity, and key public infrastructure – [requires immediate resilience planning](#) and climate adaptation plans in collaboration with municipalities. Our communities are facing [an overlap of climate-related hazards](#), such as dangerously high heat, power outages, [extreme wildfires](#), which exacerbate underlying systemic and structural resource inequities, socioeconomic challenges, and environmental pollution.

Ava Community Energy is a public, clean energy agency that can help pioneer and lead the charge for a more resilient future with our local communities, especially in climate-vulnerable areas. The Resilience Hub Initiative is a program that emerged from years of critical community advocacy by the Local Clean Energy Alliance in collaboration with key stakeholders, including community partners. Over the years, LCEA has demanded a greater surplus budget allocation from our Community Choice Aggregator (CCA) to provide expansive community benefits, increased investments, and clearer pathways for local ownership of clean energy resources. Currently, LCEA is happy to partner with Emerald Cities Collaborative, Ava's Technical Engineering Assistant (NV5), and Ava's Local Development staff to coordinate community engagement and outreach by facilitating workshops, listening sessions, and office hours to socialize, educate, and uplift communities with the Resilience Hub Initiative and connect local resilience hubs who could immediately benefit from this solar and storage incentive as well as maximize their community impact and life-affirming local work.

Resilience Hubs are defined by Ava Community Energy as follows:

Resilience Hubs are physical, community-serving facilities that provide essential services, distribute critical resources during emergencies, and integrate clean energy solutions to maintain operation during power outages. They also serve as year-round community spaces where local residents regularly gather and access everyday services.

Based on the current proposal of the SmartHome Battery Program and Resilience Hub Initiative, the Local Clean Energy Alliance and the People's Clean Power Alliance offer the following [recommendations](#):

- **The SmartHome Battery Program should recognize the months of intentional community outreach and engagement with local resilience hubs to develop a**

‘Community Definition of a Resilience Hub’ based on public listening sessions held in the Spring of 2025, facilitated both by the Local Clean Energy Alliance and Emerald Cities Collaborative as shared below:

- *A resilience hub is a trusted, community-led space that provides essential services, resources, and tools for people to access before, during, and after emergencies. A resilience hub is an inclusive and welcoming gathering space that operates year-round for community education and empowerment. A resilience hub is supported by dedicated staff and trained volunteers who are rooted in the care and culture of a community. Resilience hubs help prepare us for disasters, emergencies, recovery, and everyday well-being. Hubs are diverse and designed to be accessible to all generations.*
- While Ava has provided its own definition focused on clean energy solutions, we believe that providing a holistic, community-driven definition of a Resilience Hub is critical in advocating for a community-driven solar and storage incentive program that not only includes clean energy solutions but implements them with community priorities in mind. **We aim to integrate both definitions in our continued community outreach, engagement, and support.**
- **The SmartHome Battery Program should explicitly state the Resilience Hub Initiative in the name for programmatic clarity, public understanding, and clear community outreach.**
 - The SmartHome Battery Program is not solely focused on residents and CARE/FERA customers, but the Resilience Hub Initiative is subsumed under a name that misrepresents the focus of targeting community resilience hubs that provide a critical resilience service to community members during a public emergency or climate crisis.
 - Further, the public would benefit from greater clarity around eligibility and other requirements between different incentive offerings and programs from Ava Community Energy, such as the [Critical Municipal Facilities Program](#).
- **Based on community surveys and current pilot sites, Ava Community Energy needs to provide more robust funding, grant support, and solar financing assistance** to expand unrestricted, flexible funding for community resilience hubs, from small to large scale, which would help with day-to-day operations, staffing capacity, microgrid readiness, programmatic needs, etc.
 - The reality of the resilience hub landscape is that smaller, less-resourced hubs are unable to pay upfront capital costs to install both solar and battery storage. This solar and storage incentive program also may not be financially viable for resilience hubs that do not already have solar arrays or systems in place.
 - Funding assistance and solar financing opportunities can be modeled after services and programs that already exist, such as [BAYREN'S BAMBE](#), [On-Bill Financing](#), [PACE Loans](#), [Low-Income Weatherization Program](#), [SGIP \(Self-Generation Incentive Program\)](#), [Climate Smart Communities Initiative](#), etc.
 - CA State Grants should also be coordinated with community partners to maximize funding opportunities for eligible local resilience hub sites, with Ava

Community Energy as a local agency partner in the applications: e.g. [CA Strategic Growth Council's Community Resilience Centers \(CRC\) Program](#), [Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program \(EHCRP\)](#), and others.

- Ava Community Energy should consider distributing flexible funding through a community grants program, similar to the [Community Clean Energy Grant Program](#) as modeled by the San Diego Community Foundation and San Diego Community Power.
- **Ava Community Energy must develop an equity matrix to ensure fair and just prioritization of the solar and storage incentive program within Ava's service territory to ensure that directly-impacted, [frontline](#), and energy-burdened communities can benefit and access this incentive.**
 - Rather than a first-come, first-served model, the SmartHome Battery Program for its Resilience Hub Initiative should define and consider equity priorities as vetted by community partners to impactfully distribute solar and storage incentives to historically disinvested, disadvantaged, and marginalized communities, especially for climate-vulnerable, pollution-burdened, and energy-burdened communities.
 - There is no need to reinvent the wheel. We encourage this public agency to also consider available tools from the CA state that use equity matrices and socioeconomic plus demographic proxies:
 - Identify Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) through [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#).
 - Use the [Climate Vulnerability Index \(CVI\)](#) provided by PSE Health Energy, Communities for Better Environment (CBE), and Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN).
 - Analyze the upcoming [CEC Energy Affordability Tool](#).
 - Consider the [Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation's Climate Vulnerability Map](#).
- **We ask the Board, Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and Ava Community Energy to continue upholding the tenets of the [Joint Powers Authority Agreement \(JPA\)](#) and the [Local Development Business Plan \(LDBP\)](#), which includes the recent policy resolution of [Ava Community Energy Workforce and Environmental Justice Project Selection Criteria](#).**
 - We encourage staff to consider local contractors with high-road labor partnerships to incorporate local labor partners, build a local green economy, and provide greater cost-effectiveness to all parties involved.
- **Finally, we ask Ava Community Energy to set clear expectations, share timely updates, and ensure space for community design and input for the success and longevity of the Resilience Hub Initiative beyond the piloting stage. The Board and CAC should be provided an informational session, or a series of informational sessions, to adequately familiarize themselves with and appropriately assess the Resilience Hub Initiative for its success with communities.**

With your guidance, expertise, and insights for Ava Community Energy, your critical input can

strengthen financial support of community resilience hubs, ensure community-driven design of the solar and storage incentive program that actually centers community needs, and advance equitable outcomes through fair and just prioritization of diverse resilience hubs to continue their life-saving services for the communities you publicly serve.

Thank you for your vital work to create a more equitable, accessible, and community-designed Resilience Hub Initiative together with us.

Clean Power to the People,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dohee Kim', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dohee Kim, Campaign Organizer with the Local Clean Energy Alliance (LCEA)

Organizational Sign-Ons

People's Clean Power Alliance

Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Kenneth Tang, Oakland Organizing Director

Collective Resilience, Susan Silber, Project Director

California Interfaith Power & Light, Gregory Stevens, Northern California Director

Center for Biological Diversity, Meya Saenz Zagar, Energy Justice Campaign Organizer

Reclaim Our Power, Emi Yoko-Young, Policy Organizer

California Trade Justice Coalition, Will Jamil Wiltschko, Director

Rising Sun Center for Opportunity, Sneha Ayyagari, Director of Policy

San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility, Robert M. Gould (MD), President

San Leandro 2050, Patty Breslin, Executive Director

Public Bank East Bay, Margie Lewis, Board Member

Kehilla Community Synagogue, Beth Weinberger, Greening Committee

Individual Sign-Ons

Steven Ongerth, Cofounder of the IWW Environmental Union Caucus