COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 10/6/2026

File #: 26-1029

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Departmental

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) to Establish RCEA as the Regional Climate Committee (RCC) Responsible for Implementing the Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP), and County Contribution in the Total Amount of $323,731.72 Through Dec. 31, 2030

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Authorize the Chair of the Board to sign the MOU with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority to establish Redwood Coast Energy Authority as the Regional Climate Committee and commit the County of Humbold to annual contributions of $80,932.93, or a total of $323,731.72 through Dec. 31, 2030.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Sustainable Natural Resources & Infrastructure Stewardship
Strategic Plan Category: 5001 - Enhance climate adaptation landscapes and communities

DISCUSSION:
Executive Summary
The Board of Supervisors is being asked to enter a Memorandum of Understanding with the Redwood Energy Coast Authority (RCEA) to appoint RCEA as the Regional Climate Committee (RCC) to implement the Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAP). The MOU will also be signed by the cities in the county willing to participate in this process and will include a three-year funding commitment. Staff recommend that the Board of Supervisors Authorize the Chair of the Board to sign the MOU.

Background
After a very long process, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Regional Climate Action Plan on Dec. 16, 2025. This plan was designed to be a regional plan with participation from the cities of Arcata, Eureka, Blue Lake, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad, and the Joint Powers Authorities (JPA) of RCEA, Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA), and Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA). The RCAP has been adopted by the following cities:

- City of Eureka February 3, 2026,
- City of Rio Dell March 17, 2026,
- City of Arcata May 6, 2026, and

- City of Fortuna May 18, 2026.
- City of Ferndale September 16, 2026
- City of Blue Lake Considered on September 22, 2026

It is unknown whether the City of Trinidad will adopt the RCAP and participate in the implementation of the plan. Many of the Cities have struggled with whether to fund this effort due to the economy and concerns for individual budgets. There is momentum and jurisdictions are committing to participate.

The RCAP includes a Cornerstone Measure that calls for creation of a Regional Climate Committee (RCC). The first action of this measure, Action C-1a, is the creation of a Climate Program Manager position to lead the coordination efforts of the RCC.

Initially it appeared that HCAOG would serve as the RCC, but interest moved to RCEA. RCEA staff have been working on developing an organizational structure and has the support of the RCEA Board to serve as the RCC. On Sept. 24, 2026, it is anticipated that the RCEA Board will approve use of this MOU.

The MOU lays out the commitments of RCEA in carrying out the work of the RCC and identifies the responsibilities of the local agencies who choose to participate. Using an existing joint powers agency that serves all the involved local jurisdictions is more efficient than creating a whole new agency. There are still important organizational needs to be addressed such as how the new tasks will be absorbed into the existing organization and how a new position (Project Manager) will be funded to fulfill the vision of the RCAP for the RCC. This is addressed as part of the MOU so that all participants have agreed upon expectations.

Some of the more important considerations of the MOU are as follows:

A. Regional Climate Manager Funding. The Program Manager is an important role who will serve as the principal staff person coordinating all the work to implement the RCAP. Supporting the Program Manager at an adequate level for sufficient duration to attract a qualified candidate is critical to the success of this effort. Initially the Regional Climate Manager will be supported by the local participating jurisdictions. The shared cost is shown in Exhibit A of the MOU. The county's annual share is $80,932.93. The Program Manager position pay is structured such that the participation of Arcata, Eureka and the County will cover the cost of this position. Participation from the other cities will have the benefit of either increasing the pay of the position or allowing those funds to be used as a match in acquiring grants. For a time, it was uncertain whether some cities could participate, but recent actions and comments from Blue Lake, Ferndale and Rio Dell indicate that there will be greater participation. The MOU also states that part of the Program Manager's responsibility will be to find funding for the ongoing support of this position. The three-year commitment to funding ensures that the support for this position will be intact during the term of the MOU. If alternative funding is found, then each jurisdiction's contribution can be used to further accomplish the objectives of the RCAP.

B. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The MOU also states that there will be a TAC composed of appointed staff from each participating jurisdiction and agency. The purpose of the TAC will be to provide input to the Program manager and RCC.

C. Term. The term of the MOU is until Dec. 31, 2030. This is when the RCAP will need to be updated, so the term is to carry out the current version of the RCAP. There will need to be discussions about updating the RCAP in the next year.

D. Effective Date. The effective date of the MOU is when 85% of the population as represented by the population of the county have signed the MOU. This would be satisfied by the cities of Arcata and Eureka and the county signing the MOU.

Staff recommend the Board give the Chair of the Board authority to sign the MOU.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
General Fund Contribution to the Long-Range Planning Unit (1100-282)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
Staff time needed to continue working with the RCAP partners, and the annual contribution for the Program Manager will be provided by the General Fund contribution to the Long-Range Planning unit (1100-282). The expenditure for paying for the Program

Manager has been budgeted in the Long-Range Planning Budget and will continue to be budgeted for the next three years. Staff anticipate that the expenses (to coordinate with RCAP partners and establish the RCC and Manager position) in the 2025-26 fiscal year were approximately $11,000 from the General Fund, which was allocated to existing staff in the Long-Range Planning Division. The $80,932.93 annual cost of the Program Manager will be borne by the Long-Range Planning Budget.

STAFFING IMPACT:
Staff have been involved in coordinating on the RCAP and expects to continue that coordination role. To date there have been three staff members involved in this work. With the creation of the RCC and Program Manager it is expected that commitment of staff time will be reduced.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board may choose not to support RCEA to act as the Regional Climate Committee and house the Regional Climate Manager position. This is not recommended as it has been a long and difficult road to bring all the jurisdictions together to agree to this MOU.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Memorandum of Understanding with RCEA
2. Funding Commitments

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL: 6/11/2019; File Number 19-750