



PRESS RELEASE

MAY 2, 2017

Media Contact:

Gina DePinto, APR
(805) 568-3428, gdepinto@countyofsb.org

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SOLAR PROJECT EXCEEDS PROJECTED OUTPUT RESULTING IN INITIAL SAVINGS OF \$1.2 MILLION

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Today, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors received a five-year update on the Calle Real Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Array project (solar panels arranged in a group to capture maximum amount of sun light to convert it into usable electricity). The first five years of the project was projected to produce 8.9 million kWh. In actuality, the project has produced 9.7 million kWh, 10 percent more power than anticipated for a total utility savings of about \$1.2 million.

The solar array project was first presented to the Board of Supervisors on July 13, 2010 as a potential project in the Sustainability Action Plan with the goal of reducing electricity costs and the County's carbon footprint. Construction was completed in 2012, and within the first four months had already exceeded expected outputs.

"I am thrilled to have advocated for the Calle Real solar array infrastructure project at the time it was proposed," stated Second District Supervisor Janet Wolf. "The project has not only reduced our electricity bills for the County, but it showcases the benefits of solar energy over the use of fossil fuels. It is a message to our community that the County takes its Climate Action Plan seriously and will continue to pursue energy saving strategies."

On sunny days between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., the project generates almost enough power to completely offset the electrical needs for the County's Calle Real Campus, which is the largest energy user for the County. The campus includes the County jail, Sheriff Administration, 911 Call Center, Public Health Hospital, Public Health Administration, Mental Health Hospital, Mental Health Administration, Agricultural Commission, Environmental Health, Elections Office and Clerk-Recorder-Assessor.

The project was financed by Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds (QECB) in the amount of \$5.5 million with a 15-year term and effective rate of 1.2 percent. At the onset of the project a rebate of \$1.7 million was secured from Southern California Edison Electric (SCE). The SCE California Solar Initiative rebate lowered the net capital cost to \$3.8 million and resulted in a payback period of approximately 13 years and return on investment of 39 percent after the first five years of operation. Due to power produced above the anticipated amount, the County received the entire rebate in February 2017, four months earlier than anticipated. The solar array continues to work well and is expected to last at least 20 more years. Total utility savings after 25 years of operation is estimated to be \$9.2 million.