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Public Comment for October 15, 2026 regular meeting

From Michael Semler <michael.semler@gmail.com>

Date Thu 10/15/2026 6:23 PM

To MCE Clerk <clerk@mcecleanenergy.org>

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MCE Board of Directors
1125 Tamalpais Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: October 15, 2026 Board Meeting

Dear MCE Board Chair and Members

After observing Marin Community Energy's formation and evolution, I applaud the current Board's decision to initiate a comprehensive review of its governance structure. A look at recent Board actions as well as the Marin County Grand Jury's recommendations provide clear and compelling evidence that the Board should act expeditiously to reconstitute itself as a smaller, more accountable and efficient operation. This should be its first priority: recommend to existing member cities and counties a realistic plan before embarking on a year plus endeavor to create detailed governance policies.

The Grand Jury and public comments (I concur with the comments made in both the September 15, 350Marin letter on Agenda Item 9 and Marc Lewis' recent email) which urge the Board to take steps to reduce its size by the end of December. I believe the first requirement of an elected official is to represent the public's wishes for effective and accountable public services. It is not easy, as evident by elected officials throughout the United States, for a public official to recognize an existing governance structure is not only unworkable but handicaps an organization's mission. The Marin Grand Jury came to that conclusion and it would be wise for you to take that hard step as well.

I reviewed your consultant's report and found the extensive background material on SMUD's more than twenty years of amending its varied and comprehensive governance model quite illuminating. I read those documents as a warning: don't try to replicate that twenty year effort in a short period of time. In fact, leave all that up to a newly constituted board. Those policies should be created or enacted by that new board. The consultant team should help the Board focus on its membership not so much on recreating the SMUD model; it is too much, too soon.

I strongly urge the Board to consider, if you cannot find another equitable and efficient solution for reducing the number of Board members to create a directly elected board. Yes, another special district with Board members who might be detached from the electorate is not desirable, but it would be a better solution than the current system. Currently, in the Bay Area there exists a number of directly elected boards governing transportation systems, park districts, and water/sewage districts; all of them covering multi-county jurisdictions. The likelihood of greater accountability with subject matter expertise increases with such a model.

Again, whatever you decide, act with minimal delay — the public demands it and your staff, I suspect, will operate more efficiently when their leaders can focus on the necessary work this organization demands.

Thank you

Michael Semler, Ph.D.