



## **CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

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**DATE:** JULY 11, 2017

**DEPARTMENT:** PUBLIC WORKS

**FROM:** MICHAEL RICKER, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PLANNER

**TITLE:** PARTICIPATION IN THE INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT'S BEACON PROGRAM

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Approve the attached resolution supporting the City of Salinas' participation in the Institute for Local Government's (ILG) Beacon Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council approve the resolution supporting Salinas' participation in the ILG Beacon Program.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This year, the Beacon Program will recognize Salinas with a Platinum Award for its outstanding achievement in renewable energy and commitment to environmental sustainability. The Beacon Program is a statewide program that honors voluntary efforts by local governments to promote sustainability and save energy as a way to promote smart energy use, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Importantly, it also provides a framework to share best practices among governmental entities to create, smart, healthy and sustainable communities.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Beacon Program is a statewide program that provides support and recognition to California cities and counties that are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and adopt policies and programs that promote sustainability.

The Beacon Program provides a framework for local governments to share best practices that create healthier, more efficient vibrant communities. The program honors voluntary efforts by local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and adopt policies that promote sustainability.

The Beacon Program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative. The Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC) is a new alliance to help cities and counties reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

SEEC is a collaboration between three statewide non-profit organizations and California's four Investor Owned Utilities.

In order to participate in the Beacon Program, cities and counties must complete a simple application and do the following:

- Approve a resolution committing the agency to participate in the program;
- Designate a lead staff person as a point of contact;
- Prepare, or commit to prepare, a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory for agency facilities and the community as a whole (previously completed inventories using a commonly accepted methodology will be accepted);
- Prepare, or commit to prepare, a climate action plan that includes actions in each of the Best Practice Areas (previously completed plans using a commonly accepted methodology will be accepted);
- Work to achieve specified measurable greenhouse gas reductions and energy savings in agency facilities, and achieve measurable greenhouse gas reductions and promote energy conservation activities in the community.

The Institute for Local Government provides resources and technical support to assist participants in their journey through the Beacon Program. Through our partnerships within the SEEC collaborative, we are able to help participants obtain and record achievements in five areas of accomplishment:

- Reducing agency greenhouse gas emissions
- Reducing community greenhouse gas emissions
- Electricity savings in agencies facilities
- Natural gas savings in agency facilities
- Sustainability best practices
  - Energy Efficiency & Conservation
  - Water & Wastewater Systems
  - Green Building
  - Waste Reduction & Recycling
  - Climate-Friendly Purchasing
  - Renewable Energy & Low-Carbon Fuels
  - Efficient Transportation
  - Land Use & Community Design
  - Open Space & Offsetting Carbon Emission
  - Promoting Community & Individual Action

Within each area, a participant can earn Beacon Spotlight Awards – silver, gold or platinum, based on level of achievement. To win a full Beacon Award, participants are required to demonstrate achievement in all five areas.

Awards are given out each Fall/Winter in conjunction with the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties Conferences. Participants will be asked to provide information about their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy as well as progress in completing a greenhouse gas inventory, climate action plan and undertaking activities in the ten best practice areas in the Spring, with a final deadline for award designation in May.

Additional detailed information about the program can be found at [www.ca-g.org/BeaconAward](http://www.ca-g.org/BeaconAward).

#### CEQA CONSIDERATION:

**Not a Project.** The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Because the proposed action and this matter have no potential to cause any effect on the environment, or because it falls within a category of activities excluded as projects pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378, this matter is not a project. Because the matter does not cause a direct or foreseeable indirect physical change on or in the environment, this matter is not a project. Any subsequent discretionary projects resulting from this action will be assessed for CEQA applicability.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The proposal relates to all five of the City Council's Strategic Plan Initiatives:

1. **Economic Diversity and Prosperity:** The Beacon Award acknowledges Salinas' efforts to create a renewable source of energy and thereby provide for a potential new source of revenue to the City;
2. **Safe, Livable Community:** Development and implementation of over 6,000 new, energy efficient and more true light street lights as well as other projects as part of the Beacon Program Action Plan promote safety by improved lighting for public areas that provide for more true color rendition and visibility that will help reduce crime;
3. **Effective, Sustainable Government:** Among other activities, development of renewable energy sources generated by the City's new solar mini-farms will reduce Salinas' annual energy expenses and help sustain cost-efficient government;
4. **Well Planned City and Infrastructure:** Implementation of energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable projects are consistent with smart city growth;
5. **Quality of Life:** Reducing operating expenses and environmental degradation, while promoting sustainable infrastructure improvements enriches the quality of life for Salinas' residents and businesses.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Participation in Beacon Program has no immediate fiscal impacts. However, later preparation of an Action Plan will set in motion activities that may result in later cost. Determination of costs and funding impacts will be determined and presented at the time projects are proposed for City Council action.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution of Intention