

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

February 26, 2026

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director
Kim Fuentes, Deputy Executive Director

SUBJECT: Environmental Activities Report – January 2026

I. PROGRAMS - TECHNOLOGY, PLANNING, & RESEARCH

Energy Efficiency & Sustainability

Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN) AGENCY SUPPORT

Contract period is January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026

Contract goal: Work Plan (including goals) underway for 2026

South Bay Cities Energy & Climate Recognition Program (SBECRP)

Updated program guidelines for the fourth year of the South Bay Cities Energy and Climate Recognition Program will be announced to cities at the SBCCOG's Q1 Energy Manager Working Group meeting on February 26th. Activities completed between January 1st and the release of the updated guidelines will be included towards the awards.

A new feature - cities will have the opportunity to earn a distinct, special Partners' Award for activities in water stewardship and conservation. Requirements will also be explained at the Energy Manager Working Group meeting. This addition is in partnership with LA County Sanitation Districts, Water Replenishment District, and West Basin Municipal Water District.

See a video recap of the 2025 award ceremony and how cities earned Platinum:

<https://southbaycities.org/media-center/#video>

Energy Efficiency Project Status: SBCCOG and SoCalREN project managers are working with the following agencies to advance energy efficiency projects:

- City of Carson – A meeting was held to vet HVAC units for Capture the Cold technology – identified projects are on hold until funding pathways are identified for 2026 by the SoCalREN.

- City of Hawthorne – The Police Department lighting project and Memorial Center HVAC are in reporting phases. The SBCCOG is working with the SoCalREN to develop a case study of these projects.
- City of Inglewood – The City Hall lighting and pump project is under construction, to be completed by December 2026.
- City of Lawndale – The Capture of the Cold HVAC technology proposal developed by Stasis and SoCalREN was delivered to the city. Identified projects are on hold until funding pathways are identified for 2026 by the SoCalREN.
- City of Rancho Palos Verdes – Water heaters eligible for incentives for upgrades to Heat Pump Water Heaters have been identified at Ryan Park and the Interpretive Center. A job walk was completed on 1/21. The contractor is putting together quotes for the city.
- City of Torrance – The Capture of the Cold HVAC technology proposal for multiple sites, developed by Stasis and SoCalREN, was delivered to the city in November. Identified projects are on hold until funding pathways are identified for 2026 by the SoCalREN.
- Lennox Elementary School District – Lighting upgrades and Heat Pump Water Heater replacements are in the data collection period under the Metered Savings Program.

Facility Equipment Inventory Program (FEI) – SBCCOG staff continue to work with agencies to update FEI workbooks to capture projects that have been completed and to add additional equipment replacement needs. To date, 59 facility audits across 15 South Bay cities, 1 school district, and 1 special district have been completed and resulted in identification of over **940,000** potential kWh savings from lighting retrofits and **112** HVAC units that are overdue for replacement. From this work, staff were able to quickly facilitate installation of almost 60 Heat Pump Water Heater replacements since 2023 with no costs to the agency. In addition, SBCCOG staff continue to facilitate installation of the Capture the Cold ductwork technology offering (as low as \$6,000 before financing with as much as 40% energy savings).

The SBCCOG is also looking to audit new facilities. Please reach out to shawn@southbaycities.org if your agency is interested in completing a facility audit.

FDEEE & Commercial Direct Install

Through the SoCalREN's commercial programs, administered by Willdan and San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization, the SBCCOG implemented a pilot program for the Food Desert Energy Efficiency Equity (FDEEE) and Commercial Direct Install programs in the City of Gardena. These programs provide free energy efficiency measures and installation at hard-to-reach and low-income low-access businesses. Project construction is finishing up with 24 businesses served, \$450,000 in incentives, and \$102,000 in business' annual energy bill savings.

To celebrate these achievements, the SBCCOG and SoCalREN held a ribbon-cutting event for participating businesses, at Yas Market, on January 15th. Program implementation staff, business owners, City officials, County officials, and state legislators' offices were in attendance. Marketing materials will be shared soon.

Energy Resilience Action Plan (ERAP) Program – The SoCalREN, working with the SBCCOG, finalized Energy Resilience Action Plan reports for the cities of **Gardena, Hawthorne, Lomita, and Manhattan Beach**. Final reports and project opportunities were discussed at meetings in January. All four cities have signed commitment letters in acknowledgement of receipt of reports and consideration in future planning.

Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN) Multifamily & Kits for Kids

Contract period is January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026

Contract goals: Contact, track progress, and outreach to local community organizations; track number of virtual events held and attendees; distribute program collateral to local community organizations.

SoCalREN Multifamily and Hard-to-Reach-Direct-Install Energy Efficiency – The SBCCOG continues to identify multifamily property owner customers for the SoCalREN Multifamily program. Contacts are being identified through Chambers of Commerce and city business lists. SBCCOG and SoCalREN are working to enroll eligible properties in this energy- and cost-saving program. SBCCOG continues to share co-branded materials at community outreach events and coordinate with other agencies to help identify opportunities including chambers and the Niles Foundation.

Kits for Kids – Schools in disadvantaged areas or those that receive Title 1 funding are eligible to participate in the LA County Kits for Kids program, which provides free energy efficiency kits (LEDs, faucet aerators, and games) to third- and fourth-grade students to implement at home and \$1,000 to teachers who implement it in their classrooms.

In the Fall 2025 semester, seven schools in Hawthorne School District as well as Towne Avenue Elementary, LAUSD in the City of Carson, participated in Kits for Kids. 19 classrooms were eligible for the \$1,000 grant, awarding \$17,000 in grants to Hawthorne teachers and \$2,000 in grants to Towne Ave teachers. The SBCCOG conducted assemblies at all seven participating elementary schools in the Hawthorne School District where students received certificates and a pizza party, and the teachers received a big check. Ramona Elementary in Hawthorne, which had the most eligible students, hosted SBCCOG staff, SoCalREN implementers, and LA County managers for a special event, featuring remarks from Alex Monteiro, Hawthorne Mayor Pro Tem. This school received \$5,000 for their classroom participation. See a video recap of the Hawthorne assemblies:

<https://southbaycities.org/media-center/#video>

Southern California Gas Company Energy Pathways

Contract period is May 19, 2024 – December 31, 2027

The SBCCOG continues to work with SoCalGas to promote gas energy efficiency assistance program opportunities and financing support to cities, school districts, and residents. Program offerings were shared with businesses and with residents at community events. Current day-to-day activities continue with the support from SoCalGas staff. Program offerings and related marketing materials have been shared with agencies to support outreach to residents and businesses.

- Restaurant Energy Efficiency Starter Kit: Kit includes energy- and water-saving tools such as a pre-rinse spray valve, faucet aerators, gas valve handles, a Turbo Pot aluminum frying pan for efficient cooking, and a pocket thermometer for food service businesses.
- Commercial Building Energy Solutions and Technologies (C-BEST) Program: Provides technical assistance and incentives for businesses to implement natural gas-saving measures in commercial buildings.

Water Conservation

West Basin Municipal Water District Programs (West Basin)

The contract period is July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026

SBCCOG and West Basin met on January 5 and January 20, to discuss the implementation of ongoing and new programs for 2026-27. SBCCOG staff also continue to respond to phone inquiries on the dedicated West Basin line.

Educational Outreach Support - Exhibit Events

Contract goal: 100 exhibit events, presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, etc.

Status of goal: 60 exhibit events, presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, etc.

Support for Workshops & Webinars Educational Classes

Contract goal: Up to 17 physical classes or virtual webinars

Status of goal: 7

Upcoming Workshops:

- *Wednesday, February 25, 2026 – 11:00 am – 12: 30 pm - Transforming Gardens, Rolling Hills*

Rain Barrel Giveaway

Contract goal: 6 Rain barrel distribution events.

Status of goal: 6 Rain barrel program distributions: All events have been completed

Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD)

The contract period is January 1-December 31, 2026

Contract goal: promote WRD programs and support in-person events

Status of goal: ongoing

Ongoing promotion of WRD programs continues through SBCCOG's e-newsletters and social media channels. SBCCOG also posts WRD events on its website and sends e-blasts to help boost attendance. The SBCCOG staff attend events and distribute marketing materials to city halls, libraries, senior centers, and other community locations. In addition, WRD Eco-Gardening classes and workshops were promoted.

Coordinated with WRD personnel to present at SBCCOG's next Volunteer training which will be hosted in SBCCOG's Board room on **Tuesday, February 24 from 4:30 – 5:30 pm**. This will be a joint presentation with LACSD.

Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD)

The contract period is January 1-December 31, 2026

Educational Outreach Support - Exhibit Events

Contract goal: 100 exhibit events, presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, etc.

Status of goal: 63 exhibit events, presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, etc.

Ongoing promotion of LACSD programs continues through SBCCOG's e-newsletters and social media channels as well as website postings and coordinating LACSD upcoming 2026 events and sending e-blasts to help boost attendance. SBCCOG staff attended events and distributed marketing materials to city halls, libraries, senior centers, and other community locations. Coordinated with LACSD personnel to present at SBCCOG's next Volunteer training which will be in February in conjunction with WRD.

Task - Speakers Bureau

Contract goal: identify and coordinate up to 3 speaking opportunities.

Status of goal: 3/3 Identified and Scheduled

- *Carson Gardena Dominguez Rotary Club – Rescheduled January 14, 2026 – Completed*
- *City of Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission – Scheduled February 5, 2026*
- *City of Gardena's Planning and Environmental Quality Commission – Scheduled February 17, 2026*

Waste Reduction

Rolling Hills Organic Waste

Contract period is April 8, 2024 – April 1, 2026

The SBCCOG continues to work with the City of Rolling Hills to provide residents with education on organic waste recycling and food waste prevention. Funded by a CalRecycle SB 1383 grant, the technical consultant, EcoNomics, Inc., completed three educational videos and conducted two workshops for Rolling Hills residents. As part of this program, interested residents also received a compost bin and kitchen pail for organic waste. This program will continue through Fall 2026.

Green Business

South Bay Green Business Assist Program (GBAP): Ongoing

GBAP – The SBCCOG continues to provide information to local businesses on opportunities to implement sustainability actions and West Basin programs. In addition, businesses also receive updates

on resources from SBCCOG's utility partners. SBCCOG staff began conducting green certification outreach walks in January 2026 with the goal to certify three businesses per city. LA County is covering the cost of membership for all South Bay cities in California Green Business Network program – the tool used to conduct the certifications. This work is in addition to the GBAP information program.

GBAP by city: Carson (18), El Segundo (55), Gardena (55), Hermosa Beach (12), Hawthorne (83), Inglewood (20), Lawndale (30), Lennox (10), Lomita (9), Manhattan Beach (10), Palos Verdes Estates (9), Rancho Palos Verdes (11), Redondo Beach (6), Rolling Hills Estates (6) Torrance (92), Los Angeles County – Community of Westmont (1) and District 15 (8) for a total of 435 businesses participating as of January 2026.

Climate Action

Climate Action & Adaptation Planning Working Group Meeting: SBCCOG staff reconvened the Climate Action & Adaptation Planning (CAAP) Working Group on January 29, 2026. The meeting was well attended with 11 cities (Carson, El Segundo, Gardena, Hermosa Beach, Lawndale, Lomita, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, and Torrance). Meeting topics included updates on 2019-2020 city greenhouse gas emissions inventory reports, ICLEI ClearPath 2.0, SoCalREN energy resilience action plans, biodiversity plan and project funding, fellowship opportunities, and city updates. Cities also expressed interest in discussing climate resilience districts and extreme heat in future meetings, as well as holding future meetings on a quarterly basis.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories: SBCCOG, with support from volunteers and prior CivicSpark Fellows, has finalized all but Carson and Rolling Hills city specific 2019-2020 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory reports.

Biodiversity grant opportunity: In support of the SBCCOG subregional adaptation plan, SBCCOG staff working with the LA County's Chief Sustainability Office and Jacobs consulting firm submitted an application to Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) for developing a biodiversity plan with demonstration projects within South Bay. The SBCCOG submitted a Proposition 68 grant application in January and is now awaiting a response.

CivicSpark Fellows

Three CivicSpark Fellows are currently supporting the SBCCOG. A new fellow, Moana Franco, recently joined the team in January. Moana, CivicSpark Communications Fellow is developing and circulating SBCCOG materials, helping to create and facilitate a communications working group with cities and partners, generating content and tracking analytics for SBCCOG social media platforms, and covering various SBCCOG events. Addie Aubley is working with the energy team and Aaron Ruiz is part of the Transportation team.

Transportation

Metro Express Lanes (MEL) (Contract period January 23, 2026 – January 22, 2026)

The SBCCOG continues to prepare, update, and share the outreach calendar events to provide opportunities for Metro to share their Express Lane program. In January, the SBCCOG/SBESC distributed MEL materials at three events.

II. VOLUNTEERS

Status of Program: 25 hours for January 2026

In January, volunteer hours increased compared to December. Volunteers supported several recurring projects, including office assistance, database research, and city council agenda summaries. In addition, volunteers supported a market rental analysis for the transportation team and a research project for the communications team. The volunteer program also continued to grow, with new volunteers interviewed and beginning work on new projects.

III. MARKETING, OUTREACH, & IMPLEMENTATION

Outreach Events

In January 2026:

- 3 - Networking Event
- 2 - In Person Community Event
- 1 - Presentation
- 1 - Business Event
- 0 – Workshops Events