



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

CITY HALL

CITY OF SONORA 94 N. WASHINGTON STREET, SONORA, CA 95370 P: (209) 532-4541

SERVICE, INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, COLLABORATION, RESPECT, LEADERSHIP

DATE: July 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Chris Gorsky, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Update and Planning for Pioneer Community Energy's October 2027 Service Launch

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a Presentation on Pioneer Community Energy's (Pioneer) Planned Service Launch into the City of Sonora in October 2027.

BACKGROUND:

Pioneer and the City of Sonora began conversations about the benefits of community choice aggregation (CCA) in general and Pioneer, more specifically beginning in 2024. On July 1, 2024, the Council voted to continue the process of assessing the feasibility of joining Pioneer by jointly commissioning an Impact Assessment Study (IAS) with Tuolumne County to determine the economic feasibility and optimal timing of joining Pioneer.

Results of the IAS were presented to the Sonora City Council at its meeting on December 16, 2024. The IAS confirmed joining Pioneer provides the community with potential multiple benefits, including customer choice, cost savings, community reinvestment and local control as elected officials comprise Pioneer's Board of Directors. Additionally, the study determined that the optimal time for service launch is October 2027.

On February 18, 2025, the Sonora City Council adopted Ordinance No. 902 and Resolution No. 02-18-2025-A, authorizing the implementation of a community choice aggregation (CCA) program in the City of Sonora, and Approving the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement for Pioneer Community Energy ("Pioneer"), Authorizing the Implementation of a Community Choice Aggregation Program Under Public Utilities Code Section 366.2.

In compliance with Public Utilities Code ("PUC") section 366(c)(3), Pioneer submitted its Implementation Plan and Statement of Intent to the CPUC on March 11, 2025, and the plan was approved on June 9, 2025, for an October 2027 launch date. On July 9, 2025, all required documentation was filed with the California Secretary of State and State Controller's Office, for the City of Sonora to join Pioneer Community Energy's JPA.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:

Results of the Summer 2024 Impact Assessment Study determined the optimal time for a service launch into expansion territories is October 2027. One of Pioneer's strategic priorities is being a strong community partner and working collaboratively with the Sonora City Council to educate leadership and staff, stakeholders, and future



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customers about Pioneer's entry into the market. This includes developing and implementing a comprehensive education and outreach campaign that ensures a strong public understanding of Pioneer's expansion into the area.

Key to these efforts is creating a strong, accurate, and consistent flow of information during the next 15 months. Pioneer will take a phased approach, with communications activity ramping up over time and using a variety of communication vehicles and approaches. While specific tactics may shift over time, the general approach includes:

2026: Early education and plan development

- Working in coordination with staff and community leaders, Pioneer will develop a comprehensive communications campaign.
- Research and fact-finding into the area.
- Paid media planning and budget development.
- Active membership in area Chambers of Commerce.

2027: Plan Implementation

- Early in 2027 and through the service launch, Pioneer will use a variety of channels and regional approach to communicate to businesses and residents about the upcoming service launch.
- Create and send a series of direct mail pieces introducing Pioneer, explaining how Pioneer works, answering frequently asked questions, and familiarizing customers with program offerings.
- Paid, earned and social media.
- Conduct Town hall meetings in easily accessible, high traffic areas.
- Presentations to civic and fraternal organizations, senior centers, and others.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact on the City of Sonora. However, Pioneer requests the collaboration and input of staff to help prioritize target audiences, identify event locations, and ensure maximum effectiveness of these activities.

CORE COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability, Infrastructure and Engineering, Public Safety and Disaster Preparedness, Economic Development/Growth and General Plan, Homelessness Issues, Staffing - Salary, Benefits, Training, and Retention