

## Supervisors approve adding geothermal company to mitigation committee

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson  
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LAKEPORT &dash; The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday granted a geothermal company's request to be added to a local geothermal mitigation committee.

AltaRock Energy, of Sausalito and Seattle, will now officially be a member of the Anderson Springs Geothermal Mitigation Committee, based on a unanimous board vote.

Last month the company began drilling on a Bureau of Land Management lease held by the Northern California Power Agency, as Lake County News has reported.

AltaRock intends to use the enhanced geothermal system technology to drill deep into bedrock in an effort to release heat. The process will then inject water to get steam for geothermal energy production. That bedrock fracturing is scheduled to begin in August.

Since late last year, company representatives have been present at the committee meetings, which are attended by residents, county officials and representatives of other local geothermal operations.

Lake County Special Districts Administrator Mark Dellinger said the geothermal mitigation impact fund was established several years ago.

He said AltaRock requested to be on the corresponding committee because they wanted to participate financially in helping the community. Dellinger supported formally adding them to the group.

NCPA representative Bill Smith said AltaRock is undertaking the project to earn the right to do more geothermal development on the lease.

The committee, said Smith, is intended to allow those companies active in The Geysers operations to report on activities, answer questions and discuss the potential impacts between seismic events and their geothermal operations.

Smith said it seemed reasonable to NCPA that a new operation in the area should have the same responsibility that they have.

Committee Chair Joan Clay said the group heartily supported AltaRock joining.

&ldquo;It looks like we may be having more and more rock and roll out there,&rdquo; said Clay, referring to more earthquakes that have occurred over the last week and a half &dash; four earthquakes measuring magnitude 3 and above, as Lake County News has reported.

Clay said if another company brings a geothermal project to The Geysers it should be a member of committee, as this is the only mitigation available for damages.

Dellinger noted during the meeting that he'll come back to the board in about six weeks with the proposal that AltaRock join the Seismic Monitoring Advisory Committee.

Clay asked if they'll always have to come back to the board to seek to add any new companies.

County Counsel Anita Grant said future amendments to the committee's membership documents could be broader to allow for adding new members without coming before the supervisors.

During the discussion, Grant also suggested that the county's use permit requirements could specify that geothermal companies join the committee.

Adrian Foley, representing AltaRock, said he has been attending meetings as a guest.

&ldquo;There's a second component to whether we join or not,&rdquo; said Foley.

Foley said the company has agreed with the community and NCPA to deposit \$10,000 annually into the mitigation fund, but the mechanism for how that will take place is still up in the air.

Calpine and NCPA both make money available to the fund, said Foley. &ldquo;We're a little different than both of them in our relationships.&rdquo;

AltaRock also wants to make another general contribution to Anderson Springs' sewer project, and they are looking for a way to make the contribution, Foley said. Board Chair Denise Rushing suggested county administration can help them with that.

Anderson Springs resident Meriel Medrano, another committee member, said there are two separate committees meeting as one. In addition to the mitigation group, she said there is one that Clay calls the &ldquo;Christmas tree&rdquo; committee, which includes Calpine. Medrano said Calpine has wanted to stay separate and not put any money toward mitigation at all, just community projects.

&ldquo;They have done a great deal and we're appreciative of it,&rdquo; she said.

Dellinger said when the committee structure first was created, Calpine stated that they could not do mitigation and instead wanted to participate in a community investment fund. &ldquo;That's the way it started and that's the way it's been.&rdquo;

County Administrative Officer Kelly Cox noted, &ldquo;The monies have not been commingled.&rdquo;

Dellinger said he agreed with the suggestion that they could put committee membership in geothermal companies' use permits, but cautioned that, in the case of AltaRock, that wouldn't work since it's on a federal land lease and they're not required to get permits from the county's Community Development Department.

Comstock moved to approve adding AltaRock to the committee, which the board approved 5-0.

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