



THE

# Highlander

Jan./Feb. 2023

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

## RBDA Virtual Public Meeting

### **Meet Justin Cummings - Our new Third District Supervisor:**

### **An Evening of Introductions, Ideas and Priorities**

Wednesday January 25, 7:30 p.m. - Virtual Video Conference Meeting

Congratulations to Justin Cummings, our new District Supervisor! The RBDA is pleased to welcome Justin to our first 2023 RBDA Community Meeting! the RBDA thought it essential to have our newly-elected Third District County Supervisor, Justin Cummings, and his team at our first community meeting of 2023. Please join us in welcoming them on the 25th.

Here's your chance to let Supervisor Cummings know what you care about and are most concerned about. We'll have the opportunity to share our concerns and priorities with him and hear his views. Justin brings a wealth of experience to bear on his new role as our advocate at the county level. In this meeting, we'll learn more about him, his extensive and broad experiences, his positions and perspectives. Our goal is to continue the effective relationship that our community has with our local government.

**Zoom Instructions** for accessing this meeting can be found on Page 2



*Justin Cummings*

### **Justin Cummings, Our New Third District Supervisor**

As we enter a new year, we find ourselves in a place where there are opportunities for new beginnings. On January 2nd, 2023, I officially began my new role as the next Third District County Supervisor and I look forward to working with you all on the many issues we're facing in the Third District. To provide you with a little bit of my background, I grew up on the South Side of Chicago and went to Eastern Illinois University where I received a bachelor's in Spanish and Biology. I came to Santa Cruz in 2007 to pursue a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology with a designated emphasis in Environmental Studies at UCSC. After graduating from UCSC in 2013, I briefly moved to Miami, FL, to conduct post-doctoral research at Florida International University, where I studied the impacts of climate change on the Everglades. Since returning to Santa Cruz in 2015 I have helped create numerous non-profits at UCSC focused on preparing early-career college students to become leaders in the field of environmental conservation and training students on the use and application of drones for good.

In 2017, I started engaging in local politics because many young professionals whom I knew, including myself, found it increasingly difficult to afford to live in Santa Cruz. Many people whose families had been here for multiple generations were being forced out of the community that they knew and loved simply because of the cost of living, which is unacceptable. As County Supervisor, I will work to create safety nets and support for working families and our essential workforce so that everyone can thrive in Santa Cruz County.

Unlike the residents of the City of Santa Cruz, whom I represent but are also represented by the City Council, I am the only local representative for the people who live in the unincorporated portions of our district. This means that it will be important to maintain clear and direct lines of communication with these residents to ensure that we are hearing the concerns and meeting the needs of the Third District residents. Sandy Brown and Rachel Dann will be staffing my office along with Andrew Schiffrin, who will be helping during the first six-month transition period. If I am personally unable to reach you, someone from our staff will be in contact with you.

Moving forward there will be many challenges that we will face as we continue to help people rebuild from the CZU fires, address infrastructure issues along the coast, prepare for the opening of the Cotoni Coast Dairies National Monument, and strengthen our disaster preparedness, among many others, and I look forward to working with you all to ensure that the decisions that we are making will provide the most benefit to the residents of the Third District. If we are all in this together it means we must all work together. Have a safe and happy new year and I look forward to the progress we will make together.

— Justin Cummings

## Three RBDA Board Members Are up for Election

The election will be held at the next public meeting, which will be held by Zoom at 7:30 p.m. January 25. In accordance with the RBDA Bylaws (<http://www.rbda.us/who-is-the-rbda/rbda-bylaws/>), nominations of the Nominating Committee were presented at the November public meeting, and no additional candidates were nominated by other members. The January meeting will be open to anyone who wants to attend, but as specified by the Bylaws, only active RBDA members (people who have paid their membership dues) are permitted to vote for the board. See elsewhere in this issue for the Zoom link. We also have one open seat on the board that we will appoint someone to until the next election in January 2024. If you are interested in helping the Bonny Doon community by working on important issues like communications, wildfire safety and recovery from the CZU fire, road maintenance and repair and adherence to land use regulations, contact us at [board@rbda.us](mailto:board@rbda.us).

### Candidate Biographies



Martin Burmeister

**Martin Burmeister** I am originally from California's Central Valley and I have spent my entire life living in various parts of California. My wife and I moved to Bonny Doon six years ago, seeking a more peaceful, rural setting, away from the congestion of the Silicon Valley where I work as an engineering project manager. We love the serenity of living within these redwood forests, minutes from the Pacific coast below. We also enjoy the diverse community of individuals that populate this area. It is this combination of unique people and this beautiful setting that makes Bonny Doon special. I hope to continue to serve the community as editor of *The Highlander*.

**Eric Ornas** I am a retired software executive who has spent over 35 years in a variety of roles in different sectors of the industry. My wife and I discovered Bonny Doon by chance in 1988 when we moved to the Bay Area. Discouraged by not finding a house to rent because we had 6 pets, we answered an ad in the newspaper, "house for rent, pets okay", that took us to Bonny Doon. Fate could not have been kinder. We were introduced to a magical combination of a strikingly beautiful environment of land and ocean and a marvelous community of people. This flatlander from Indiana had found his home.

I was told by a long-time resident that Bonny Doon was nicknamed Battle Mountain because there's always some hot issue being debated there. He said people don't always agree, but they do work together for the common good. I have seen this in action many times as issues arose around land use, changing community needs, and natural disaster emergencies.

I have always supported the RBDA and have recently worked with the group to improve our communication infrastructure, increasing accessibility of cell service and internet connectivity. I now would like to serve on the RBDA board because it will give me a better opportunity to give back to my community as we address the issues and challenges life presents to us while we maintain the best of Bonny Doon.



Eric Ornas



Laurie Taylor

**Laurie Taylor** I have lived in Bonny Doon since 2017. I'm married to my husband Scott and we have a 26 year-old daughter, Alex. I am the office manager for a General Contractor and I am also a Notary Public. I love living in the mountains and I am passionate about our community. My goal is to increase our membership so we can all work together to tackle issues and strengthen our little piece of paradise.

### Virtual Meeting Participation

Zoom ([zoom.us](https://zoom.us)) is a video conference platform that is free to use through either a web browser or application, and audio participation is possible through a dial-up connection on your phone. For this meeting, we will be utilizing all the available security features, including password-protection and waiting rooms managed by the host. Zoom Meeting Instructions:

#### To join by internet:

- 1) go to <http://zoom.us/join>
- 2) Enter the Meeting ID. **987 3871 7843**
- 3) Click join
- 4) Enter passcode: **418702**

#### To join by phone:

- 1) Call +1 669 900 6833
- 2) When prompted enter the Meeting ID. **987 3871 7843**
- 3) When prompted enter passcode: **418702**

We will be utilizing waiting rooms managed by the host.

## NEM 3 Update: New Rules Approved By CPUC

Continued from page 4

- Users will benefit from pairing solar installation with battery storage: The rates as calculated by the cost avoidance method tend to peak in the early evening hours when electricity demand is at its highest. Yet this is precisely when solar electricity generation is winding down. Battery storage of solar generated electricity allows one to take advantage of the higher credit rates.
- NEM 3 rules result in an overall 75% reduction in per kWh credits: Analysis by the California Solar and Storage Association (CALSSA) estimates that NEM 3 reduces credit rates from an average of \$0.30 per kWh under NEM 2 down to an average of \$0.08 per kWh or about a 75% reduction. This will substantially increase the amount of time it will take customers to recover the installation costs for solar systems.
- Existing NEM 2 solar customers will be grandfathered: Existing customers remain subject to the NEM 2 rules rather than NEM 3 for the next 20 years.
- New solar customers can be grandfathered under NEM 2 before April 13, 2023: New solar customers who submit a complete interconnection application before April 13, 2023 when NEM 3 goes into effect will be grandfathered under NEM 2 for 20 years. Note that you do not need a permit, a completed install, or a completed inspection to be grandfathered into NEM 2. Furthermore, you have three years to complete the actual construction of the solar system as long as the paperwork is filed and accurate.

This final point is the most important one for those who are considering installing solar on their house: the time is now to install solar.

For more information on NEM 3, see <https://www.solar.com/learn/nem-3-0-proposal-and-impacts-for-california-homeowners/#changes>

### What You Would Like to See Featured in Future RBDA Community Meetings?

As we look ahead to the coming year, we want to make sure that we are presenting topics that are of genuine interest and importance to the Bonny Doon community. Please send your ideas to: [board@rbda.us](mailto:board@rbda.us)

### RBDA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yearly dues are \$20/pp or \$15/pp for multiple members at same address.

Memberships expire on Jan. 31 of the next year. \*

Number of Members \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years you are  joining or  renewing for \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply years times number of memberships. Checks only, please, made out to RBDA.

Amount enclosed for dues: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I also wish to support the RBDA with an additional contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount of enclosed check \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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I certify that I (we) live or own property in the Bonny Doon Planning District.

Clip out and mail to RBDA, P.O. Box 551, Felton, CA 95018.

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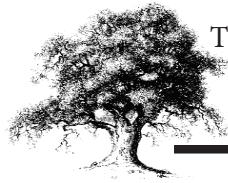
RBDA, P.O. Box 551

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Dues mostly go for printing and mailing **The Highlander**, your voice for keeping Bonny Doon rural and natural.

Additional contributions are gladly accepted and greatly appreciated!

\*Dues paid after Nov. 30 count toward the next year.



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*Keeping Bonny Doon Rural and Natural since 1957*

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*Bonny Doon's voice in preserving our special quality of life, The Highlander, is mailed free 6 times a year. RBDA Public Meetings are usually held the second Wednesdays of January, March, May, September and November. We encourage you to participate. Send correspondence to The Highlander at the above address.*

Access the RBDA on the Internet at:

[www.rbda.us](http://www.rbda.us)

E-mail us at:

[board@rbda.us](mailto:board@rbda.us)

Facebook (RBDA Members Only):

**RBDA, Rural Bonny Doon Association**

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**Bonny Doon Resident  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

## **January 25th RBDA Public Meeting: Meet 3rd Dist. Supervisor Justin Cummings**

### **Net Energy Metering (NEM) 3 Update: New NEM Rules Approved By CPUC**

On December 15, 2022, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) unanimously approved a revision to the set of rules collectively known as NEM 3. These newly approved changes to the rules that will come into effect on April 14, 2023 will substantially alter how much individuals with solar panel or windmill installations will be credited by the utilities for the electricity they export to the grid.

#### **NEM Overview**

The NEM rules define how the excess electricity generated by individual producers (i.e., non-corporate) of solar, wind or other alternative energy sources are credited. This is the second time that these rules have been revised by the CPUC since they first came into being in 1995, known as NEM 1. These initial rules allowed customers to receive a credit for each kWh of electricity pushed back onto the grid equivalent to the cost of purchasing a kWh from the grid. The first revision to the rules, known as NEM 2, came about in mid-2016. This revision imposed new requirements on customers:

1. One time interconnection fees paid to the utilities
2. **Payment of per kWh fees (\$0.02 to \$0.03) for electricity consumed from the grid**
3. Time of use rates: credits paid out for electricity pushed onto the grid vary by day of the week and time of day rather than at a fixed rate.

The CPUC began review and revision of NEM 2 rules in 2020, resulting in the NEM 3 proposal that was first put out in late 2021. The new rules would have imposed substantial fees for each kWh of a customer's installed electricity generating capacity along with substantially reduced per kWh credit rates. The new rules, which largely favored the public utilities (PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E) encountered such strong opposition from the rooftop solar industry and the public that the CPUC indefinitely postponed the January 2022 meeting which would have approved these new rules. The CPUC then reworked the NEM 3 rules and finally approved them at its rulemaking meeting in December 2022.

#### **Key points of the NEM 3 rules to note:**

1. No new fees or charges: the charge on installed electricity capacity was abandoned.
2. New "Cost Avoidance" based credit rates: the rates will change from a retail rate for the exported electricity to a rate based upon the value determined by the utility's avoided cost of buying clean energy elsewhere.

*Continued on page 3*