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'Blue Tech Valley' leads state on innovative water technology and clean energy

SAN FRANCISCO— Drawing on its traditional farming expertise and natural resources, San Joaquin Valley is fast becoming known for its renewable energy leadership and cutting-edge innovations at the nexus of water and agriculture—earning the nickname Blue Tech Valley. *Clean Valley: San Joaquin Valley Leveraging Natural Resources to Grow the Clean Economy*, a new analysis from the nonpartisan nonprofit group Next 10 (www.Next10.org), finds the San Joaquin Valley is using a mix of natural, technological, governmental, human, and business resources to mold key building blocks in California's clean economy.

"The San Joaquin Valley is first region in the nation to develop an industry-led water technology cluster—a group of business leaders, community partners and academics working to drive economic development by strategically leveraging the region's unique assets," said businessman F. Noel Perry, founder of Next 10. "This thoughtful planning and execution has created a hub for developing and testing new water technologies, including new ways of approaching irrigation, conservation and metering."

The region's water cluster features more than 200 companies located in the valley and networked nationwide, ranging from farms to tech firms.

"Companies have a fertile space to develop and test water technologies, with an incubator space through the WET Center, certified testing facilities, and connections to farmers for field testing,' said Helle Petersen of Fresno State's Water Energy Technology (WET) Center, which serves as an incubator, hub, and testing facility. "This regional collaboration among business, economic development, workforce and community partners creates an opportunity for the region to be a leader in water innovations."

Innovative partnerships have also helped the San Joaquin Valley become California's **leader** in installed renewable energy capacity.

"Kern County has the highest installed renewable energy capacity in the state, with more than 8,750 megawatts permitted—enough to generate electricity for more than seven million people," said Doug Henton, chairman and CEO of Collaborative Economics, which compiled the reports for Next 10. "These projects have attracted $25 billion in investment capital."

The region also has nearly 65 MW in rooftop solar generation, due in part to innovative programs designed to help lower-income residents install panels on their homes. And to help ensure that local residents benefit from the growth in this industry, Kern County established a rule that renewable energy installation contracts must hire workers from

within the local community. This and other factors have contributed to the creation of 6,000 construction jobs and 1,500 operational jobs in Kern County.

In all, there are more than 10,500 jobs in the San Joaquin Valley's core clean economy, which includes businesses that provide the products and services that are facilitating the transition away from fossil fuels and the more efficient use of natural resources.

About Next 10

Next 10(www.Next10.org) is an independent, nonpartisan organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. With a focus on the intersection between the economy, the environment, and quality of life, Next 10 employs research from leading experts on complex state issues and creates a portfolio of nonpartisan educational materials to foster a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting our state.

About Collaborative Economics,

Collaborative Economics (www.coecon.com), which prepared the regional reports and the California Green Innovation Index, is a Silicon Valley-based research and consulting organization. CoEcon works with businesses, foundations, government, education, and community sectors to do leading edge innovation and clean economy analysis for states and regions across the country.