

To: East Bay MUD Board and Staff

From: Clean Energy & Jobs Oakland campaign¹

Prioritize the development of local renewable energy resources in an East Bay Community Choice energy program.

Action

We call on East Bay Municipal Utility District to make the development of local renewable assets a central feature of an East Bay Community Choice program, thereby maximizing benefits to East Bay residents, electricity customers, the local economy, and the environment.

Rationale

The building of local renewable energy assets within a Community Choice program's service area provides for greenhouse gas reductions, local economic development, clean energy jobs, the lowering of electricity bills, creation and retention of wealth within the community, greater community resilience in the face of climate change, and other benefits to the community. These benefits are consistent with East Bay MUD's commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship, and customer service.

Economic development of local resources also provides political buy-in from the community and strong leverage against customers opting-out of the program, thus minimizing risk and strengthening the overall economics of the program.

An essential aspect of establishing a Community Choice program that meets community benefit goals is the creation, with community input, of an energy resources development plan that specifies renewable energy development projects and programs, their financing, social and environmental impacts, and workforce requirements.

Background

Community Choice energy, provided for by AB 117 (2002), enables cities and other jurisdictions to choose where the electricity provided to their residents and businesses will come from. In particular, Community Choice energy means that local communities can choose to procure their electricity from renewable energy sources: either by purchasing renewable electricity on the market, or more importantly, by developing local renewable energy resources in the community. These resources can be demand reduction assets (for example, energy efficiency and conservation) or new renewable electricity generation. Under a Community Choice energy program, the incumbent investor-owned utility company (PG&E) continues to deliver electricity and service customers.

Community Choice energy can be a key vehicle for greenhouse gas reductions, local energy resource development, economic growth, and clean energy jobs.

¹ The Clean Energy & Jobs Oakland campaign has the goal of establishing, in conjunction with other East Bay cities, a Community Choice energy program for Oakland that provides community benefits (such as local economic development, clean energy jobs, lower utility bills, stable prices, cleaner air, and community wealth retention) to residents of our city..

Because a Community Choice program is administered by a local non-profit entity, it does not pull wealth out of the community to pay shareholder dividends or executive salaries. Rather a well-designed Community Choice program can develop assets that bring wealth to the community and which can dramatically increase the economic and job creation benefits of the program. It can provide lower electricity costs, higher rate stability, and greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions than what is provided by investor-owned utilities. Community Choice represents the potential for developing to scale the public works program needed to address both the economic and climate crises of our communities.

One of the powerful aspects of a Community Choice program is that it shapes energy development decisions to local conditions. The objective is to match available local renewable energy generating resources (for example, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, combined heat and power, and other potential sources), local physical characteristics (residential, industrial, and commercial structures, disturbed land, and other aspects of the built environment), and the local energy demand profile (by location, time, and customer class), to optimize the local development of energy resources.

Because energy demand reduction is by far the cheapest resource to procure, it is a crucial aspect of developing new renewable resources, especially when combined with local electricity storage resources and demand response technologies (modifying demand to match supply conditions).

The Community Choice program can leverage the development of demand reduction, local renewable generation assets, and system optimizing technologies, as the program expands, to reduce electricity bills below those of the incumbent investor-owned utility. In this way a Community Choice program can build customer loyalty and assure the viability of the Community Choice program.

Signatories

This call is endorsed by the following organizations:

East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE)

Sun Light & Power

Ella Baker Center for Human Rights

Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)

Sungevity

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)

Causa Justa::Just Cause

Local Clean Energy Alliance

Sierra Club

PUEBLO

Bay Localize

West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP)

Planting Justice

Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club

Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)

Earth Justice Associates of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland

Alameda County Green Party