

BRIGHTLINE DEFENSE PROJECT

“Protecting and empowering communities.”

SUNSET RESERVOIR SOLAR PROJECT

**“GREEN JOBS FOR COMMUNITIES”
CAMPAIGN**

www.brightlinedefense.org

SOUTHEAST JOBS COALITION

March 17, 2009

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Carlton B Goodlett Pl.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Aboriginal
Blackmen
United

Re: Solar Installation at Sunset Reservoir

Anders &
Anders
Foundation

Dear Supervisors:

A. Philip
Randolph
Institute

The Southeast Jobs Coalition is a collection of community-based organizations committed to the cause of job creation and workforce development in San Francisco's southeast communities. One of our recent areas of focus has been the recruitment of candidates for green jobs, and most of the jobs created under the City's GoSolarSF workforce development program have been filled by our ranks.

Arc
Ecology

Last week we became aware of the City's proposed 5-megawatt solar installation at Sunset Reservoir. We have great concerns about this project, the most serious of which is that the City is ready to lease city property to Recurrent Energy to develop this project without a local hiring requirement that will bring jobs to the community.

Positive
Directions
Equal Change

We are also concerned that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission never met with community stakeholders to discuss this project and create a local hiring provision. As it stands, the project appears set to move forward without any community input and without any vision for the creation of green jobs in the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that are most hungry for jobs.

Visitacion
Valley
Community
Development
Corporation

Young
Community
Developers

We ask that the City withhold its approval of this solar project and lease agreement until a number of questions can be answered: 1) how many green collar jobs will be generated by this project, 2) what assurances can the City put into this agreement to guarantee opportunities for San Francisco's qualified economically disadvantaged residents, 3) will Recurrent Energy enter into a Community Benefits Agreement to fund Green Collar Training for those candidates, and 4) why has the SFPUC staff not met with the community to discuss this project and local hiring.

Sincerely,

Claude Everhart
YCD

Karen Gilbert
VVCDC

Joseph Bryant
APRI

Jesse Mason
Arc Ecology

James Richards
ABU

Terry L. Anders
Anders & Anders

Naim Harrison
PDEC

Labor donated

BRIGHTLINE DEFENSE PROJECT

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San Francisco, CA 94102
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www.brightlinedefense.org

April 9, 2009

Edward Harrington
General Manager
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
1155 Market Street, 11th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: *Community-Based Green Job Creation In
Proposed Sunset Reservoir Solar Project*

Dear Mr. Harrington:

I thank you for indicating your willingness to sit down with the community and members of the Board of Supervisors to discuss the Sunset Reservoir solar project. Since my meeting request I have spoken with many community leaders to discuss a strategy that will ensure that this \$50 million project creates green jobs for San Francisco's underserved communities.

While I understand from your staff that the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development is taking the lead with respect to First Source hiring, we continue to ask for your direct and personal involvement because the community believes that the SFPUC must negotiate hiring provisions beyond First Source with the project's lead contractor, Recurrent Energy. The SFPUC is in control of the total contract and, as Recurrent's customer in this proposal, the SFPUC is best positioned with the advice and good counsel of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to achieve a better jobs package for the community.

The following proposed additions to the Sunset Reservoir Power Purchase Agreement and Lease Agreement are the results of discussions within the community, language which we feel is necessary to implement the all-inclusive approach to building a green economy envisioned by Mayor Newsom and leaders at the Board of Supervisors. I hope that this proposal can be the centerpiece in our upcoming discussion with you and in your follow-up discussions with the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and other community-based organizations.

We ask that the following guiding principles be incorporated into both the Sunset Reservoir's project's Power Purchase Agreement and Lease Agreement with the City:

1. The project, which consists of the installation of 25,000 solar panels and is anticipated to generate at least 60 green jobs, should consist of a 100% local San Francisco workforce.
2. The lead contractor, Recurrent Energy, and its electrical subcontractor shall sponsor 8 new electrical apprenticeships for economically disadvantaged residents drawn from San Francisco's 8 most disadvantaged zip codes: 94102, 94103, 94108, 94110, 94112, 94115, 94124, and 94134. Recurrent and its subcontractor will make their best effort to hire one apprentice from each zip code, but may increase that number if candidates from one of the zip codes are not forthcoming.
3. Recurrent and its subcontractor shall hire economically disadvantaged residents from the same 8 zip codes to fill all laborer positions on the project. These positions have the lowest barriers to entry among the trades and are most ripe for workforce development opportunities.

4. Recurrent and its subcontractor shall recruit the new electrical apprentices and laborers through the San Francisco Workforce Development System, which provides communities and the organizations that seek to empower them the opportunity to refer qualified candidates for employment.

We have drawn heavily from the successful community partnership at the Pier 96 Recycling Facility in laying out these points. Supervisor Maxwell, with the assistance of the Port of San Francisco and the community, worked with Norcal Waste Systems and Teamsters Local 350 to craft and implement language in the Pier 96 lease agreement that has created a wealth of opportunities for underserved residents of Southeast San Francisco and still works within the framework of the First Source Hiring Program and the collective bargaining agreement that governs organized labor at Pier 96.

I look forward to our meeting and your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Joshua Arce
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Gavin Newsom

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

David Chiu, President

Eric Mar

Michela Alioto-Pier

Carmen Chu

Ross Mirkarimi

Chris Daly

Sean Elsbernd

Bevan Dufty

David Campos

Sophie Maxwell

John Avalos

City Attorney Dennis Herrera

Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development

Michal Cohen, Director

Rhonda Simmons, Director of Workforce Development

Guillermo Rodriguez, Director, CityBuild

Asian Neighborhood Design

Charity Cultural Services

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Mission Hiring Hall

San Francisco Conservation Corps

Southeast Jobs Coalition

Visitacion Valley Jobnet

Young Community Developers

SF VOTES TODAY! CA's Largest Solar Project Would Include 30% Green Local Hiring Requirement

Joshua Arce

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2009 11:07 AM
To: Brightline - Front Desk
Attachments: PRESS RELEASE - SF Sunset ~1.pdf (55 KB)

For Release: Contact: Joshua Arce (Brightline) 415-860-2150
Tuesday, April 28, 2009

SAN FRANCISCO'S SUNSET RESERVOIR SOLAR PROJECT WILL INCLUDE THIRTY PERCENT MINIMUM LOCAL HIRING REQUIREMENT

Advocates Seek To Establish New Standards For Green Job Opportunities In Traditionally Underserved Communities, SF Board of Supervisors to Vote on Tuesday, April 28 at 2:00 PM

San Francisco, CA, April 28, 2009 – For environmental justice advocates the phrase “green jobs” has a connotation that reaches beyond the employment context. In fact, the idea of “green jobs” is viewed by many as a means of promoting social justice by reaching out to those traditionally ignored by major environmental movements, partnering with low-income communities of color, limited English speakers, and the formerly incarcerated to solve what green jobs activist Van Jones calls America’s two biggest problems: social inequality and environmental destruction.

A proposal to build a 5-megawatt solar installation at San Francisco’s Sunset Reservoir, the largest solar project of its kind in California, was met with resistance in the city’s Budget & Finance Committee on March 18 when environmental justice leaders on the Board of Supervisors and in the community highlighted the project’s failure to implement an all-inclusive vision of green job creation. Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi, John Avalos, and David Campos in particular locked on to the project’s failure to include a binding “local hiring” provision to create opportunities for qualified workers from San Francisco’s most economically disadvantaged communities.

That all changed, however, when solar developer Recurrent Energy saw the political writing on the wall as the item was continued for a month, prompting Recurrent to engage community-based organizations, Supervisors, and Mayor Gavin Newsom’s workforce development team to craft language to guarantee that a green workforce that reflects the diversity of San Francisco will build the \$50 million project for the city.

The results were unveiled in a follow-up Budget Committee meeting on April 22. A binding commitment from Recurrent to hire a workforce of at least thirty percent qualified economically disadvantaged residents from the City’s most underserved communities in Southeast San Francisco, Chinatown, the Mission, Western Addition, the Excelsior, the Tenderloin, and South of Market was met with unanimous approval by the twenty community representatives and advocates that spoke at the April 22 hearing.

Supervisor John Avalos, who as Chair of the Budget Committee has consistently identified opportunities to enforce local hiring policies and guarantee employment for low-income residents throughout San Francisco, lauded the progress that has been on green jobs, as did the project’s sponsor Supervisor Carmen Chu. Supervisor David Campos acknowledged the work that had been done on the green workforce development front, but had several important questions about the financial terms of the solar project contract.

The proposal was advanced to the full Board of Supervisors for a vote today at 2:00 p.m. One major unanswered question is whether the proposed workforce provisions fully address the concerns of Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who has been the Board’s leading advocate in creating green workforce opportunities for underrepresented San Franciscans. Supervisor Mirkarimi was unable to attend the April 22 Budget hearing due to the birth of his son the day before.

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Article
SFGate.com

Sunset Reservoir solar plan meets green goals

Adam Browning, Francesca Vietor

Tuesday, May 5, 2009



With San Francisco's aggressive efforts to develop renewable energy sources and President Obama's welcome change-of-tune from the Bush administration on global climate change, it's difficult to imagine that a proposal to more than triple the city's municipal solar power - with a single, cost-effective, low-risk project - could become controversial.

But San Francisco's oft-stated commitments to expanding solar power and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions face a crucial test today at the Board of Supervisors.

At stake is the approval of a new 5-megawatt solar power installation that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission would like to place atop its recently seismically retrofitted Sunset Reservoir. Once completed in 2010, the Sunset Solar Project would be California's largest solar photovoltaic system and the nation's largest municipal solar project - tripling the amount of solar energy generated in the city and delivering the equivalent energy used by about 1,500 San Francisco homes.

The commission would immediately use the clean energy to power city facilities and services such as our streetlights, public schools, Muni and San Francisco General Hospital. And the system can also become a critical source of clean power to meet the energy needs of potential customers at Treasure Island, Hunters Point and other neighborhoods.

Boost to green economy

In addition to offering significant environmental benefits - reducing carbon emissions by more than 109,000 metric tons - the Sunset Solar Project would also boost San Francisco's emerging green economy. With state and local unemployment levels at their highest in decades, this project would immediately create 71 new jobs in the rapidly expanding solar energy industry. Signed agreements are also in place to give hiring preferences to local and disadvantaged residents.

The project's environmental and economic benefits have earned it the strong support of organizations such as the Sierra Club, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Greenlining Institute,

S.F. Community Power, Green for All, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, the Brightline Defense Project and others.

So what's not to like?

Some have wondered why the city isn't building the system on its own. Instead, San Francisco is using a commonly utilized public-private partnership known as a power purchase agreement to move the solar project forward in a fiscally responsible way.

Through this agreement, Recurrent Energy, a San Francisco-based company with significant California solar experience, assumes all the risk and responsibility of financing, constructing and operating the project. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission commits only to buying all of the solar power from the system at a competitive rate for the next 25 years.

The power purchase agreement lets the city pay for predictable clean power rather than expensive solar infrastructure. In addition to removing the project's up-front cost, the contract allows the city, which doesn't pay taxes, to effectively harness a 30 percent federal investment tax credit available to private companies like Recurrent.

\$25 million savings

All in all, that's an arrangement that saves the city \$25 million over going it alone. Moreover, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has the option to purchase the Sunset Solar Project outright at depreciated costs at various points in the life of the contract. Because of these attributes, every large-scale purchase of solar by a city or municipal utility since 2007, when the federal tax credits were first available, has used a power purchase agreement.

Concerns have also been raised about the 25-year length of the contract commitment. But solar installations need a lot of up-front capital, mainly for equipment and construction costs. Similar to the kind of covenant that banks require of homeowners to secure a mortgage, Recurrent needs a long-term guarantee from the commission in order to line up financing for the project.

Members of the Board of Supervisors have asked responsible questions about the project. But we believe that the commission and Recurrent have worked diligently to address these concerns in ways that make the Sunset Solar Project even more economically compelling and financially responsible for the city.

There is no more time for delay. An approval today by the full Board of Supervisors would demonstrate the city's willingness to take bold steps toward energy self-sufficiency and once again place San Francisco at the vanguard of America's clean energy future.

Adam Browning is executive director of the Vote Solar Initiative, and Francesca Vietor is a commissioner of the San Francisco PUC.

SF VOTES TODAY! Sunset Reservoir Solar Will Jump-Start City's Renewable Portfolio And Create Green Jobs

Joshua Arce

Sent: Tuesday, May 05, 2009 9:05 AM

To: Brightline - Front Desk

SUNSET RESERVOIR SOLAR PROJECT WILL JUMP-START SAN FRANCISCO'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PORTFOLIO

Supervisors Vote Today On State's Largest Solar Installation; Proposal Includes Green Workforce Requirement Of At Least 30% Economically Disadvantaged San Franciscans, Over 50% Local Hiring Overall

San Francisco, California, May 5, 2009 -- This afternoon San Francisco Supervisors will vote upon whether to build what would be the state's largest solar power plant, a 5-megawatt installation on top of the City's Sunset Reservoir. That the proposed facility would be this state's largest while Florida's 25-megawatt Desoto Solar Energy Center comes online by year's end speaks volumes about the need to ramp up California's investment in solar power, especially when it reduces our cities' need to purchase fossil fuel power during times of peak demand. Today's proposal is unique, however, in that a weeks-long debate about the terms of the deal's financing has allowed green jobs advocates to secure a binding commitment from solar developer Recurrent Energy to hire at least thirty percent of the project's green workforce from San Francisco's eight most disadvantaged communities. In fact, more than half of the entire project workforce will be made up of San Francisco residents.

Contractual issues surrounding the solar proposal have apparently been resolved to the fullest extent possible, leading environmentalists, community advocates, and a broad cross-section of San Francisco civic leaders to agree: It is time to approve this project.

Since last week's vote on the solar contract was continued, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi has noted that the project's cost becomes increasingly unfavorable for the City in future years if San Francisco declines the option to purchase the solar panels outright in the seventh year. He is right, and it must be stated now and forever that the City must purchase this facility as soon as it has the opportunity, especially if the project cost is to remain in line with a very similar recent proposal by Gemini Solar to build 30 MW for the City of Austin, Texas.

However, the recent decision by Supervisor Eric Mar to co-sponsor the solar proposal has elevated excitement among green jobs advocates that his involvement will help push the project's community hiring requirement beyond thirty percent and the target for hiring local San Franciscans well past fifty percent. Supervisor John Avalos has also locked on to the importance of establishing a baseline minimum for underserved community hiring on green projects, which is part of the larger call for local hiring of San Francisco workers when public dollars are involved. It appears that Supervisor Carmen Chu has championed a proposal that has united traditional environmentalists such as the Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists with community-based green jobs advocates both national and neighborhood in scope, including Green For All, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Young Community Developers, Visitacion Valley Community Development Corporation, and Asian Neighborhood Design.

The questions raised about the project's financing and the City's control over the facility have been addressed as much as they can be, and undoubtedly the City's next project of this scale and scope will include all of the lessons learned during this healthy discussion. Yet the debate about how San Francisco will build its next major solar installation does not detract from the fact that the City's solar future starts today, with this project. The Sunset Reservoir solar plant has excited too many stakeholders, including leaders from San Francisco's communities of color, limited English speakers, and formerly incarcerated ranks, who have had the chance to sit down with Supervisors to voice their feeling that this green movement truly appears to hold a place for them.

Today's project will be approved, and San Francisco will be all the better for it.

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SUPERVISORS APPROVE SUNSET RESERVOIR SOLAR INSTALLATION

State's Largest Solar Project Will Create Green Jobs For Underserved San Franciscans Starting In July

San Francisco, CA--May 14, 2009--One day after Supervisors Sophie Maxwell and Michela Alioto-Pier announced a plan to begin closing San Francisco's last fossil fuel-burning power plant by year's end, yesterday the Board of Supervisors approved a contract to build what will become the state's largest solar power plant. Construction of the 5-megawatt Sunset Reservoir solar project, which was presented by Supervisor Carmen Chu, will begin in July and the facility should come online just as San Francisco's Potrero Power Plant begins powering down.

Environmental justice and community development activists have highlighted the importance of the requirement that the solar project's workforce be made up of at least thirty percent economically disadvantaged residents of the City's most underserved communities, including Bayview-Hunters Point, the Mission, Chinatown, and the Western Addition. Supervisor Eric Mar provided a critical voice of support for the proposal, conducting last-minute due diligence on the terms of the solar contract on behalf of his colleagues and embracing an emerging blue-green alliance of community workforce and environmental advocates.

Supervisor Mar has pledged to push the thirty percent community hiring threshold even further, and it is understood that more than half of all jobs on the project will be filled by local San Franciscans. Hiring will take place over the next several weeks through the city's CityBuild program, and jobs are expected to last six months. It is hoped that the experience gained by workers on this project will translate into continued employment in the green sector and also aid the efforts of Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi, David Chiu, John Avalos, and Mar to address the broader issue of strengthening San Francisco's local hiring programs.

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