



Dear Sierrans and Friends:

California has returned to the leading edge of the clean-energy transformation that will cut pollution, power our economy, and improve the health of state residents and the environment.

The recent nuclear disaster at Fukushima in Japan, as well as the first anniversary of the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, remind us of how damaging our reliance on dirty fuels is to our health and the ecosystems that support life on our planet.



Solar Panels on a Farm Building

California is lighting the way to a clean-energy future. On April 12, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB x1 2, requiring public and private utilities to procure 33 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2020. The new renewable power standard (RPS) established by the bill will electrify the Golden State's economy with new jobs, while reducing the pollution that causes climate disruption, as well as, damage to our environment and public health.

Over the last 3 years, your Sierra Club California team supported the legislation through testimony at hearings, direct advocacy and action alerts to our members. We made the clean-energy bill a top priority at our annual Lobby Days, training activists to talk to their legislators about the need to ramp up renewable power.

“This bill will bring many important benefits to California, including stimulating investment in green technologies in the state, creating tens of thousands of new jobs, improving local air quality, promoting energy independence, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions,” said Brown in his signing message.

But Governor Brown isn't stopping there, and neither are we. “While reaching a 33 percent renewables portfolio standard will be an important milestone, it is really just a starting point - a floor, not a ceiling,” Brown continued in the message. “Our state has enormous renewable resource potential. I would like to see us pursue even more far-reaching targets. With the amount of renewable resources coming on-line, and prices dropping, I think 40 percent, at reasonable cost, is well within our grasp in the near future.

Your Sierra Club California team is working for policies that will move us away from polluting fossil and nuclear fuels and toward solar and wind power and more efficient use of energy. We are urging additional reforms to ensure the continued success of both renewable energy and energy efficiency programs that provide green jobs. First, in designing a new approach to renewable energy, the Brown Administration and the California Legislature can look to

programs that already work. A program, known as a “feed-in tariff,” has already been successful in international markets, including in Germany. A “feed-in tariff” sets fixed prices for renewable energy that is added to the electrical grid by home owners, businesses, and renewable developers, allowing them to generate renewable energy on their roofs or other privately owned areas. A Feed in Tariff rewards these local energy generators, who are exhausted by the roller-coaster of our current system of expiring and renewing tax credits, with reliable pricing for their energy. It also provides communities with a level of economic certainty that will help ensure local renewable energy jobs are created as California pursues clean energy development. In his Clean Energy Jobs Plan, Governor Brown calls for California to develop 12,000 megawatts (MW) of locally generated renewable energy by 2020.

Generating clean energy locally, near the homes and businesses that consume it, is efficient, because significant amounts of electricity are lost in long-distance transmission. Furthermore, decentralized energy can be brought on line quickly, and stimulates local economic development and community jobs. That is why we also support Governor’s Brown’s plan to install more than 3,000 MWs on state buildings and other state properties. The more clean energy we build at the local level, the less we will need remote large-scale power plants and their associated distribution networks. Sierra Club is working to protect sensitive habitats from the impacts of transmission lines and large industrial facilities. Adopting state policies that promote local generation helps to reduce the footprint of power production.



Source: Flickr user *spanginator*,
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Second, the cheapest and most reliable form of energy is using the energy we already produce more efficiently. Currently, \$250 million dollars is raised each year from a charge on utility bills to fund energy efficiency programs in California. However, authorization for this “public goods charge” expires at the end of this year. Sierra Club California will push the Legislature to reauthorize this important funding source and improve our state’s energy efficiency programs. At the top of our list, we will ask that the state’s utilities directly incorporate both energy efficiency and

distributed generation in their resources planning and procurement processes. Sadly, between 2006 -2008, California’s utilities fell short of the energy efficiency goals the state set for them despite spending over \$1 billion dollars in ratepayer money. Therefore, we will push for independent administration of these funds rather than continuing to allow the utilities to spend these ratepayer dollars as they see fit. As energy efficiency is the most economical method for reducing greenhouse gases and other forms of air pollution, we need to change the current programs in order to get more bang for our ratepayer dollars.

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