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Community Choice Victory in Alameda County

October 5, 2016



Martha Kuhl, First Vice-President of the Alameda Labor Council and leader of the California Nurses Association, speaks in favor of community/labor Unity Proposal at press conference, October 4, 2016 outside County administration building.

October 4th marked a victory for East Bay communities and the East Bay Clean Power Alliance's Clean Power to the People efforts. The [Board of Supervisors voted to approve](#) establishing a Community Choice energy program with a commitment to maximizing community benefits and including community input in the governance of the program.

The County approved a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement, the foundation document for establishing the Community Choice program. The agreement represents a commitment to

the goals advocated for by the East Bay Clean Power Alliance. It also incorporates a groundbreaking [Unity Proposal](#) released two weeks earlier by the East Bay Clean Power Alliance and the Alameda Labor Council.

The Alameda Labor Council includes the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the California Nurses Association (CNA), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and many other East Bay unions.

Some groundbreaking achievements formalized in the JPA agreement include:

- Establishing a Community Advisory Committee, with the chair of the Committee sitting on the JPA Board as a non-voting member
- Committing to community benefit goals, including quantifiable economic benefits to the region, including jobs and community ownership of renewable resources
- Developing, within 8 months of agency formation, a business plan for achieving local renewable energy development, union and family-supporting jobs, and other community benefits
- Committing to take steps to minimize impacts to workers displaced by the transition to a clean energy economy

The JPA agreement also committed to capping the use of unbundled Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) at half that allowed for state RPS compliance, or 1.65% of energy supply. While disappointed that the county did not prohibit the use of unbundled RECs, which represent greenwashed fossil-fuel energy, the East Bay Clean Power Alliance and labor allies will continue to fight to ensure the program provides truly renewable energy. (For more information, see [What the Heck is a REC?](#))

Following the October 4th decision to move forward, the County will enter Phase 2 of establishing a Community Choice program. This means reaching out to the thirteen cities in Alameda County to join the JPA and forming the agency in January 2017. And it means doing the business planning called for by the Unity Proposal.

Phase 2 represents new work for advocates as well, in ensuring that the cities sign on, that the business plan is a good one, and that community benefits are at the forefront of the program.