

Clean Power to the People

May 25th 2016:

A Crucial Moment for East Bay Community Energy



The May 25th Clean Power to the People event was the third in a series of campaign updates/strategy sessions on efforts to establish a Community Choice energy program in the East Bay that advances economic, environmental, and racial justice.

Participants/Attendees

In addition to organizers from the Local Clean Energy Alliance, individuals representing Allen Temple Baptist Church, SEIU 1021, Energy Solidarity Cooperative, Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, Bay Area Green Tours, Xochipilli Men's Circle, Oakland Rising, and U.S. Labor Against War, among others, participated.

Purpose/Goal

The goal of the Clean Power to the People May 25th gathering was to build support for an East Bay Community Choice energy program that meets our communities' needs. With a Community Choice energy program, decisions about where our electricity comes from are in the hands of a public agency. However, establishment of the Alameda County Community Choice energy program is moving forward on a fast track *without our communities' active involvement or input*. This event was held to engage community organizations in the East Bay and solicit ideas for a community action.

Program and Vision Conversation



Following a food & drink mixer (thank you to [Masa Pa' La Raza](#)), the event included an update on the developments of Alameda County efforts to establish a Community Choice program and the campaign of the East Bay Clean Power Alliance to ensure that it achieves strong community benefit goals.

The Alliance calls for a vision of Community Choice that prioritizes development of community-based renewable energy resources. Discussion focused on job opportunities that could come from a Community Choice energy program. The question was, *what kinds of jobs are created in addition to installation and maintenance of solar and wind projects?* Demand reduction creates opportunities for jobs such as weatherizing and upgrading of buildings for increased energy efficiency

Solar jobs are often criticized for the lack of “good job” opportunities, as they are often low-paid and non-union jobs. Project Labor Agreements enable projects to be unionized and local

hire provisions. However, a Community Choice program can aggregate smaller installations into larger projects that can be performed under union Project Labor Agreements. These projects can prioritize job opportunities for low-income people, persons of color, women, and marginalized people, including recently displaced-long-term residents. [Read more about our Vision for Local Renewable Energy Build-out here.](#)

This vision makes Community Choice energy a vehicle for benefitting our communities—particularly frontline communities most impacted by climate change, poverty, pollution, police, and prisons—allowing them to directly own, control, and govern local clean energy resources. This ownership and control empowers our communities to advance environmental justice, improve racial and economic equity, and build stronger, more resilient communities.



Update on East Bay Community Energy

Alameda County staff, advised by their consultants, is moving two main initiatives forward on a “fast-track” to establish an East Bay Community Choice energy program.

The County is concluding a “feasibility study” to give the County the green light to establish the program. The East Bay Clean Power Alliance submitted comments to the County arguing that this feasibility study should only be used to show that we can move forward with this program, but should not be used for planning nor design of the program. [Read East Bay Clean Power Alliance comments submitted to Alameda County here](#)

The County is simultaneously drafting a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement that serves as the bylaws of the program. The East Bay Clean Power Alliance submitted proposed revisions to the original draft, advocating for the program goals to be stated in the JPA document and for the JPA governing board to include five non-voting community representatives. The five community members would represent the following sectors: environment, labor, renewable energy, diverse/small (i.e. women and/or cooperative) businesses, and racial equity and inclusiveness. A JPA board is traditionally made up of elected officials, but there is precedent for having ex-officio community representatives on governing boards as well. [Read East Bay Clean Power Alliance JPA language and proposal for community representation here.](#)

The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to act on the Community Choice feasibility study and the JPA agreement on July 19, giving the green light to proceed with establishing the Community Energy program. It is crucial that supporters of a community-focused Community

Choice program stand up for our right to be directly involved in the governance of the program to ensure that it prioritizes the development of local renewable resources and delivers maximum benefits to communities in Alameda County.

Outcomes: Ideas for Action

Participants suggested holding a press conference; soliciting stories from various local news sources, including radio and local papers/websites; and getting attention to the issue through social media. Another idea is to roll out a letter writing campaign using an online platform for generating letters to the Board of Supervisors. Help is needed to share the links and garner more public support via social media.



Help with Outreach

The May 25th Clean Power to the People gathering helped build organizational outreach to support a community-focused Community Choice program. Attendees agreed to contact other organizations to sign on to the call to [Put Our Communities in Community Choice Energy](#).

The Local Clean Energy Alliance asked participants to help set up meetings with organizations they are connected to. A staff member or volunteer can attend to brief the organization and bring outreach materials.

Organizations that are interested in joining the East Bay Community Choice energy initiative are invited to request presentations for membership, executive boards, or other bodies within the organization.

Please direct any inquiries about the campaign or presentations to:

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Available Resources

- [Program Vision: East Bay Community Energy](#)
- [East Bay Community Choice Energy: from Concept to Implementation](#) (in-depth 34-page report)
- [Community Choice: Economic Development Clean Energy & Jobs](#) (two-page handout)
- [Promoting a Labor Friendly Community Choice Program](#)
- [Basic 1-pager on Community Choice - Call to Action!](#)
- [Community Choice, Community Power video](#)

