



Marin Voice: Marin benefits from clean energy

By Shawn Marshall and Marla Fields
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THE BENEFITS of Marin Clean Energy for Marin's consumers are clear - lower electricity rates for twice the renewable energy, without PG&E's multiple generation-rate hikes under review at the California Public Utilities Commission.

MCE customers will not experience any difference when turning on their lights because the only thing that's changing is the mix of renewable energy they're purchasing.

MCE customers won't experience any difference when a power line goes down, because PG&E will continue to maintain and repair their power lines and poles. And MCE customers won't experience any difference when paying their bills, except their electrical generation line item will actually be lower. That lower rate is expected to stay low while PG&E has 10 rate increases totaling \$5 billion requested through the CPUC over the next three years.

Marin Clean Energy also offers several advantages for Marin, not through taxpayer money, but by redirecting a portion of PG&E profits to benefit our County. Without MCE, Marin residents will continue to send approximately \$12 million each year in shareholder profits to PG&E. As a nonprofit public program, Marin Clean Energy will recapture that excess revenue for use within the borders of Marin.

What about Royal Dutch Shell? MCE exported to Shell about \$600 million through 2018.

Here are some ways Marin Clean Energy could use these redirected funds:

- Solar financing and net metering: Cash-strapped schools, large businesses and homeowners can become energy "revenue centers" by installing rooftop solar with financing incentives provided by MCE. After powering their own buildings, they can sell excess energy to MCE at a higher rate than is offered by PG&E. This is possible because MCE wants to incentivize local solar generation to fulfill its goal of providing 100 percent renewable electricity within the first 10 years of operation. MCE net-metering policies and plans for property-based solar financing reflect this commitment.
- Senior and low-income programs: MCE will offer the same special rates for qualifying senior and low-income customers that PG&E offers, and MCE will provide the tools to reduce their energy use such as home insulation, weather stripping, and low-energy usage lighting options.
- Local methane recapture: MCE can partner with local sanitary districts and landfills to capture and purchase methane-based energy by offering fair market rates that turn expensive pollution into a local economic solution.
- Reserve account to support price stability: Because MCE has entered into a five-year energy contract with set pricing, MCE customers are already assured of future price stability. But if needed, the Marin Energy Authority can draw on its operating reserves to keep energy prices low and maintain its commitment to meeting or beating PG&E's costs.

- To stimulate the local economy and save money: Many local "green collar" jobs, such as green tech, solar installers and energy efficiency consultants, will be created at a time when Marin unemployment is reaching record highs. Furthermore, Marin Clean Energy lets individuals, businesses and local governments avoid the high costs of compliance with California's AB32 mandate that requires substantial greenhouse gas reductions over the next 10 years. MCE accomplishes this on behalf of our cities and towns without the need to tap into their general funds.

It's no wonder that thousands of Marin residents, businesses and organizations enthusiastically support Marin Clean Energy.

At 1 p.m. May 7, Marin Clean Energy will start supplying green energy to its first 7,000 customers. That day will mark a milestone in history, as the vision of energy independence and lower energy costs in Marin becomes a reality.

For more information on the "commencement of service" celebration and/or how to step up to MCE's 100-percent deep-green product, please visit www.marincleanenergy.info.

Join state Sen. Mark Leno, Assemblyman Jared Huffman and many other community leaders at the Civic Center Lagoon on Friday to help us celebrate this important local achievement.

Mill Valley Councilwoman Shawn Marshall is vice chair of the Marin Energy Authority. Marla Fields of Novato has been involved in the push to start Marin Clean Energy.