



For Immediate Release

January 11, 2013

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DWP Board of Commissioners Votes to Approve Rooftop Solar Program

*Feed-in tariff program advocated by Los Angeles Business Council
will generate significant jobs and economic activity while reducing greenhouse gas emissions*

LOS ANGELES (January 11, 2013) – The Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners voted today to approve a 100-megawatt feed-in tariff (FiT) program for Los Angeles, clearing the way for the largest urban rooftop solar program of its kind in the nation.

The vote authorizes the DWP to move forward with 100 megawatts of FiT energy by 2016, released in five allocations of 20 megawatts each. In March, the DWP will present a proposal for an additional 50 megawatts. The full 150-megawatt program will be a major economic driver for Los Angeles, creating 4,500 jobs and generating a half-billion dollars in economic activity at full scale, while also eliminating 2.25 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2016.

The centerpiece of the CLEAN LA Solar program, the FiT will allow local property owners to sell solar power generated from rooftops and parking lots back to the DWP. In addition to spurring private investment and creating high-quality jobs, the program will supply renewable energy at a reasonable cost while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping the state and city meet renewable power requirements. The full program will power some 34,000 typical L.A. homes.

“Today’s vote is a major step forward for the economic and environmental sustainability of Los Angeles,” said Mary Leslie, President of the Los Angeles Business Council, which has been the leading advocate for the CLEAN LA Solar program since 2009. “We are grateful to our CLEAN LA Coalition partners as well as Mayor Villaraigosa and the many city leaders who helped make this vision a reality.”

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa helped set the CLEAN LA Solar plan in motion in 2008, when he ambitiously called for a 150-megawatt FiT program to be created in Los Angeles.

“I am thrilled that the LA Department of Water and Power Board of Commissioners has approved the 100-megawatt FiT Set Pricing Program, making Los Angeles the largest city in the nation to implement a feed-in tariff system,” said Mayor Villaraigosa. “This program will spur new private sector investment that will create jobs while decreasing our city’s reliance on dirty fossil fuels.”

The program would not have been successful without the leadership of two key Los Angeles City Council leaders, Eric Garcetti and Jan Perry.

“The CLEAN LA Solar program and the solar FiT are job creators that move us away from coal and toward clean, renewable energy,” Garcetti said. “Los Angeles has a talented workforce and abundant sunshine and we need to put those resources to work for us.”

“Not only will the feed-in tariff attract significant private investment, it will underline the fact that Los Angeles is a national leader in the renewable energy industry,” Perry said. “This program represents a smart, economical investment in the long-term health and vitality of our city. I am delighted by today’s approval by the Board of Water and Power Commissioners.”

The program establishes an initial guaranteed price of 17 cents per kilowatt-hour, which advocates confirm will be a determining factor to encourage participation. Supporters also praise the inclusion of a “set-aside” allocation for small projects in each of the five 20-megawatt allocations. The allocation for small projects will ensure that local businesses, such as warehouses, and multi-family residential buildings also benefit from the program.

As a result of today’s announcement, one company – Solar Provider Group – has announced plans to significantly expand its investment in Los Angeles. The investment includes opening a new office and hiring additional employees, validating the economic stimulus to the local economy which will result from the rooftop solar program.

“Solar Provider Group applauds today’s vote by the Board of Water and Power Commissioners approving the FiT program,” said Christian Wentzel, President of Solar Provider Group LLC. “This program provides us with the stability we need to enter the U.S. solar market.”

Wentzel said the company plans to open its headquarters in Los Angeles within three months with the intent to hire 10-30 new employees in sales, engineering and construction over the next year – creating new, high-quality local jobs. The company’s LA headquarters will serve as its base of operations as it evaluates additional investments throughout California and the Western U.S.

Solar Provider Group has already invested more than \$1 million in Los Angeles during the FiT program’s demonstration phase, and plans to invest up to \$50 million by the end of 2016.

The decision by Solar Provider Group to invest in Los Angeles reinforces the central findings of the LABC and the LABC Institute: the FiT will generate substantial economic returns for Los Angeles. Critically, the research also validated that Los Angeles has a ready “workforce in waiting” of trained solar workers who are poised to fill solar jobs.

“Our workforce training programs have helped hundreds of men and women get the tools they need to thrive in a 21st-century, sustainable economy,” said Jose Osuna of Homeboy Industries. “Make no mistake – not only is the feed-in tariff good for the environment and the economy, it’s good for the members of our society who were at risk of being left behind.”

Jacob Lipa, Chairman of the Los Angeles Business Council, said today’s vote speaks to the influence of the broad CLEAN LA Coalition, which includes more than 30 members, who have pursued the implementation of the program over the last four years.

“The Solar FiT is a prime example of the progress we can make in Los Angeles when we work together. It’s an innovative program that delivers real benefits for businesses in the city while also advancing the goals of environmental advocates, social justice groups, and others,” Lipa said.

Currently, most of L.A.’s renewable power is generated outside the L.A. basin and transmitted inefficiently to customers. By contrast, the CLEAN LA program will incentivize clean-energy production within city limits by taking advantage of L.A.’s vast, underused rooftop space. The result will be more efficient power delivery and a reduction in the city’s reliance on energy produced by coal.

“In the 21st century, it is simply unacceptable for the majority of L.A.’s energy to come from polluting coal-fired power plants,” said Evan Gillespie of the Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign. “The pathway to a cleaner energy future will depend on sound, economical programs like the feed-in tariff to wean ourselves off of coal. We are proud to have worked alongside the Los Angeles Business Council to make this program happen.”

Brad Cox, Chairman of the LABC Institute, said the feed-in tariff exemplifies the LABC’s coordinated approach to effecting positive change in Los Angeles. “By working closely with UCLA, USC, and our many coalition partners – along with the DWP and Los Angeles’ political leadership – we are demonstrating that the Los Angeles Business Council serves as a bridge between the public and private sectors to implement socially responsible and smart business policy in Los Angeles. This is a great day for our city.”

About the Los Angeles Business Council

The Los Angeles Business Council is one of the most effective and influential advocacy and educational organizations in California. For over 70 years, the LABC has had a major impact on public policy by harnessing the power of business and government to promote environmental and economic sustainability in the Los Angeles region. To learn more, please visit www.labusinesscouncil.org.

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