

School Energy News Wire

A Newsletter for Efficient & Climate Friendly Schools

SPI ANNOUNCES SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE REPORT

California should retool its school construction process to foster 21st Century learning, streamline school-building regulations to help create jobs, and change state law to encourage campuses to install solar and other renewable power systems, according to a report released earlier this month by State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson.

Torlakson announced the release of the Schools of the Future Report and highlighted key recommendations at a ceremony to dedicate a solar power system installed at Aragon High School and the five other campuses in the San Mateo Union High School District.

“Our students deserve to learn in schools designed for the 21st Cen-

tury—not relics of the past,” Torlakson said. “California can lead the way, and help our schools save money and create good jobs in the process. The solar power system coming online today at Aragon High School shows that the time to create the schools of the future is now.”

Taking on one of the Renewable Energy Subcommittee’s recommendations head-on, SPI Torlakson took a leadership role helping schools become energy efficient. Torlakson named CDE architect Diane Waters as Energy Liaison. Waters will serve as a clearinghouse for best practices and advocate for schools while working with the state’s Energy and Public Utilities commissions.

San Mateo Union Board President Stephen E. Rogers served as co-

chair of Torlakson’s Schools of the Future Team, and helped lead the effort to install solar power at the district’s campuses, paid for by a local bond measure approved by voters.

“Our project proves a central theme of the Schools of the Future Team’s report: that schools can embrace clean, renewable energy while putting more money into the classroom and creating new opportunities for our students to learn about the environment,” Rogers said.

The 17,000 solar panels installed on school roofs, along with other energy-efficiency measures already put in place, are expected to save and generate 3.72 megawatts—enough power to offset 48 percent of the energy needs at the schools, saving the district \$1.2 million in annual energy costs.

The project also included developing sustainable energy curriculum, supplies, and equipment for use in district classrooms, allowing stu-

(Continued on Page 3)

SEC TO PRESENT AT CALIFORNIA GREEN SCHOOLS SUMMIT IN PASADENA

The School Energy Coalition will be presenting along with members from the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (C.A.S.H.) at the California Green Schools Summit in Pasadena on October 17.

The workshop is titled, *Energy – It’s the Key to Begin the Green Process* and SEC will specifically be presenting on Why School Involvement in Energy Policy is Important, State and Federal legislation and the SEC organization itself.

If you have any questions regarding the workshop, please contact Anna Ferrera at aferrera@m-w-h.com.

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GOVERNOR BROWN SIGNS TWO IMPORTANT SOLAR POWER BILLS

On a sunny morning on September 22, 2011, **Governor Jerry Brown** visited Marshall Elementary School in Fowler, California and signed **Senate Bill 585 (Kehoe)**; legislation to restore funding for the California Solar Initiative Rebate Program, including solar rebates for school district projects.

Senate Bill 585 (Kehoe) authorizes a budget increase for the California Solar Initiative (CSI), created in 2006, to drive the installation of 3,000 megawatts of rooftop solar power by 2016.

This bill would:

- Increase the CSI cost limit to \$3,550,800,000;
- Make a corresponding increase in a monetary limit imposed on programs funded by charges collected

from customers of the state’s three largest electrical corporations;

- Require the Public Utilities Commission, before collecting additional ratepayer funds to fund certain program shortfalls, to first allocate interest accumulated from customer collections and, for the remainder of the shortfall, to increase collections from customers of the state’s three largest electrical corporations for specified programs; except as specified, set the discount rate for interest at 4%; and,
- Require the commission, within 90 days of the enactment of the bill, to establish and impose project cost caps for residential and nonresidential projects under the CSI, based on national and state installed cost data.

Governor Brown also signed **As-**

sembly Bill 1150 (M. Perez), which extends the Self-Generation Incentive Program, providing rebates for wind, fuel cells and other technologies that can generate electricity on-site where the electricity will be consumed. This bill would extend the authority of the Public Utilities Commission to authorize electrical corporations to continue making the annual collections through December 31, 2014.

Governor Brown’s call for building 12 GW of rooftop solar and other forms of small scale renewable energy by 2020—that’s enough energy to power the equivalent of 9 million single-family homes.

SB 585 and AB 1150 will play important roles in reaching this goal.

SEC OPPOSES SB 136 (YEE): LEGISLATION STILL AWAITING GOVERNOR’S ACTION

Senate Bill 136 (Yee) would define private power purchase agreement contracts between schools and energy companies – these agreements are for the purchase of generated power only – as public projects subject to prevailing wages.

See SEC’s letter to Governor’s Office asking for his veto of SB 136 on our website at www.schoolenergysolutions.org.

Schools have been entering into these power agreements with third parties so that they might provide clean renewable power, off the grid, with no up front cost. Schools simply get a set price for power that saves money at a time when budgets have been severely cut, teach-

ers have been let go and class sizes have been increased.

SEC has argued that this bill may result in fewer contracts being offered to schools as energy service companies calculate whether they will pencil out in the long-term.

SEC is also concerned about the language in SB 136 under Section 1720.6 (a) which states that “work performed in connection with the construction or maintenance of renewable energy generating capacity or energy improvements” triggers prevailing wage mandates.

SEC believes that energy audits and analyses, often the starting place for schools that eventually enter these

agreements, would also be included under this legislation. Energy audits are services, not construction-related, something the author has stated previously that this was an area where the bill was not intended to go.

The Governor has recently signed a renewable portfolio standard seeking to increase the use of renewable power in the state.

SEC’s position is that the legislation may result in fewer of these types of contracts being offered to schools runs counter to that state policy goal of lowering carbon emissions, relieving pressure on the electrical grid, saving dollars and a cleaner environment.

Schools of the Future (Cont'd from Page 1)

dents to learn first-hand about renewable power systems and energy efficiency.

Torlakson created the Schools of the Future Team to bring together creative thinkers from schools, labor, and business to examine the planning, design, and financing of school construction projects as well as fostering sustainability and energy efficiency.

The School Energy Coalition was represented on the 90-member team that compiled its recommendations into the 90-page report Torlakson made public last week. The complete report is available online on CDE's website.

Torlakson said that while many elements of the report would require additional study and review, he would move to carry out several key recommendations, including:

- Support a future statewide fa-

cilities bond measure to fund new construction and modernization projects throughout the state that will invest in students and teachers and create jobs.

- Examine regulations to ensure they are streamlined, promote safe and sustainable schools, and meet the needs of today's students.

- Highlight best practices for school facilities by creating a Web page with links to research on creating learner-centered, safe, sustainable schools that are centers of the community.

- Sponsor legislation to encourage schools to install solar and other renewable energy systems. Torlakson is sponsoring SB 843 (Lois Wolk D-Davis), which would lift the cap on the size of school solar projects and allow school districts to aggregate renewable energy generated at one school—or at an

off-site solar farm—to offset costs at other campuses. SEC is participating on a coalition working with Senator Wolk on this bill.

- Establish a Green Schools Award. Torlakson said the California Department of Education (CDE) would partner with the U.S. Department of Education in the pilot year of their Green Ribbon Schools award, which was announced earlier this month.

Torlakson also said his office would review the Team's other recommendations regarding legislation, including creating a 21st Century schools renovation program, increasing modernization funding for renewable energy, and restoring dedicated and sustained school maintenance funding.

SOLAR INSTALLATION IN FOWLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECTED TO SAVE COMMUNITY \$439,000 IN FIRST YEAR

Fowler Unified School District developed a solar installation proposal that is projected to save the District \$439,000 in total electricity costs in the first year. The District used rebates offered under the California Solar Initiative to finance and develop their solar project. *(See article on Page 2 regarding SB 585 (Kehoe).)*

These savings will go directly into the District's general fund and are expected to grow over the years as utility rates increase. The school district will also use

the cost savings as an educational opportunity for students by providing displays with "real time" information about the production of solar electricity from the panels.

Over a five year period, savings are estimated to be \$2,321,000 and more than \$13 million over 25 years. Installation of the solar panels in the area is expected to begin in 2012. TerraVerde Renewable Partners, worked closely with the school district on this project.

OTHER SEC-SUPPORTED LEGISLATION SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR; SB 679 STILL PENDING

Under California law, the Governor has 30 days at the end of session to sign all of the bills that are on his desk. October 9 is the last day he will be able to sign, veto or let a bill become law without his signature. The following legislation has been signed into law:

SB 226 (Simitian) CEQA Requirements for Solar Energy Projects

This bill would, among other things, exempt from the requirements of CEQA the installation of a solar energy system, including associated equipment, on the roof of an existing building or an existing parking lot meeting specified conditions.

AB 462 (Lowenthal): Natural Gas Infrastructure and Vehicles by School Districts

This bill would authorize air pollution control districts to use the last \$2 of an already authorized fee to fund programs to replace onboard natural gas tanks on school buses owned by a school district that are 14 years or older, with a funding amount not to exceed \$20,000 per bus and to enhance deteriorating natural gas fueling dispensers of fueling infrastructure operated by a school district, with a one-time funding amount not to exceed \$500 per dispenser, pursuant to the Lower-Emission School Bus Program.

SB 16 (Rubio) Expedited Renewable Energy Permits

This bill would require the department to take prescribed procedural steps regarding applications for certain eligible renewable energy projects, including determining whether the application is complete or incomplete, notifying the applicant of its determination, and approving or rejecting an incidental take permit application for an eligible project within specified timeframes. The bill would require the department to provide an accounting to the Legislature on incidental take permit applications for eligible renewable energy projects, and to report to the Legislature on the extent to which it arranges for entities other than itself to provide all or part of the environmental review of eligible renewable energy projects. This bill would become operative only if AB 13 of the 2011–12 First Extraordinary Session is enacted.

SB 209 (Corbett) Common Interest Developments: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

This bill would provide that any covenant, restriction, or condition contained in any deed, contract, security instrument, or other instrument affecting the transfer or sale of any interest in a common interest development, or any provision

of the governing documents of a common interest development, that effectively prohibits or restricts the installation or use of an electrical vehicle charging station is void and unenforceable. This bill would however authorize an association to impose reasonable restrictions on those stations and would impose requirements with respect to an association's approval process for those stations.

Pending Governor's Signature:

SB 679 (Pavley) Reallocation of Energy Conservation Assistance Funds

This bill would appropriate \$25,000,000 of the unencumbered balance of the \$50,000,000 that was appropriated to the authority to the Energy Conservation Assistance Account, a continuously appropriated account, to be expended by the commission for the purposes of providing loans to eligible institutions, including schools, thereby making an appropriation. The bill would revert any unexpended funds appropriated by the above provision remaining in the Energy Conservation Assistance Account on and after January 1, 2013, except to the extent those funds are encumbered, back to the Renewable Resource Trust Fund for use by the authority for the PACE Reserve program.

EVENT OF INTEREST

Southern California Gas K-12 Symposium

Thursday, October 13

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. (8 a.m. check-in and continental breakfast. Lunch provided.)

Cost: Free

http://www.socalgas.com/documents/business/erc_training_printable_quarter4.pdf

SCHOOL ENERGY COALITION

Membership Application

Yes! I wish to become a member of the School Energy Coalition (SEC). Please enter my yearly membership at the following fee:

FEES:

- Local Education Agencies (includes Districts, COEs, Community Colleges) \$250 per year
- Small School Districts (Less than 2,500 ADA & Charter Schools \$100 per year
- Businesses/Associates \$750 per year

Contact Name _____ Date _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Payment Method:

Check # _____ P.O. # _____

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