



September 3, 2015

Supervisor John Gioia
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Re: Creation of Community Choice Energy in Contra Costa County

Dear Internal Operations Committee:

The City of Walnut Creek supports Contra Costa County exploring the creation of Community Choice Aggregation or Community Choice Energy (CCE), which would be initiated by the County and that local cities could participate in its creation or join. The City encourages the Internal Operations Committee to act quickly to study the issue and make a recommendation, which will help the cities determine the options available to them on CCE.

On June 2nd, the Walnut Creek City Council heard two presentations on CCE and created an Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Mayor Pro Tem Loella Haskew and Councilmember Justin Wedel, to explore all options available to the City. The options included not joining a CCE at all, joining an existing CCE entity (Marin Clean Energy or Sonoma Clean Power), becoming part of a CCE in the formation phase (Alameda County), creating a new CCE at a subregional level to be made up of interested cities, or encouraging the creation of, and joining, a Contra Costa County CCE. The Ad Hoc Committee concluded that the City should not initiate a CCE on its own, but that joining an existing CCE or future CCE is a viable approach that the City should pursue.

So far, the City has taken two actions. First, based on the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation, the City Council directed that a non-binding letter of intent be submitted to Marin Clean Energy (MCE). A letter indicating interest in potential membership was sent to MCE on August 10, 2015. This letter is the first step in the MCE membership process. While MCE is not currently accepting any new member cities, its Board of Directors will consider the question of expansion at its September 17th Board meeting. The cities of Richmond, San Pablo, and El Cerrito are already members of MCE. The City of Lafayette has also decided to submit a letter of intent to MCE.

Other Bay Area communities are either exploring or actively pursuing CCEs. These include the City and County of San Francisco, the County of San Mateo, the County of Alameda, and a group of Silicon Valley communities. The cities of Cupertino, Mountain View, Sunnyvale and unincorporated Santa Clara County have partnered to form Silicon Valley Community Choice Energy to conduct an initial CCE study (www.svcleanenergy.org). However, the efforts of the other Bay Area communities have not yet proceeded to creation of a CCE that the City could consider joining.

Second, the Ad Hoc Committee also recommended that the City send a non-binding, no-cost letter to the Internal Operations Committee of the County encouraging the County to explore creating a Contra Costa County CCE. On September 1, the City Council approved sending this letter to you.

The City of Walnut Creek supports Contra Costa County exploring a CCE initiated by the County as it could be a cost-effective strategy to reduce emissions, it could provide for an increase in the use of renewable energy, thereby helping achieve the goals of our Climate Action plan, it could either save the community money through a reduction in electricity rates or provide community with the choice of purchasing up to 100% of energy from renewable sources, and it would allow for greater local control over electricity rates and CCE decisions. The City prefers joining a Contra Costa County CCE, as we have long-established cooperative relationships with the County that are working very well and providing significant benefits to the communities that we serve. I believe this would be a further extension of those relationships.

Please contact Administrative Analyst Cara Bautista-Rao at bautista-rao@walnut-creek.org or (925) 943-5899 x2216 for further discussion. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Simmons".

Bob Simmons
Mayor