

The Board of Supervisors

County Administration Building
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Contra Costa County



David Twa
Clerk of the
Board
and
County
Administrator
(925) 335-1900

July 11, 2017

Philip Haddix
The Solar Foundation
600 14th Street, NW - Suite 400 Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Haddix:

Contra Costa County is pleased to submit this application to become a designated SolSmart community. Contra Costa County is committed to the goals of the SolSmart program. As a designated SolSmart community, Contra Costa County would benefit from the advising and technical assistance offered by the U.S. Department of Energy. This assistance will help the County expand its solar energy programs and make them more accessible to all residents and community members in the unincorporated County.

Our County has a history of leadership on renewable energy issues. The eastern part of our County includes the Altamont Pass, one of the original wind resources developed in California. Contra Costa County promulgated one of the earliest streamlined permitting rules for rooftop solar, which became the model for the State of California rules.

In December 2015, Contra Costa County adopted its first *Climate Action Plan* (CAP). The CAP calls for the County to increase the amount of renewable energy deployed on homes, businesses, and public lands and buildings. Through a recently awarded grant from the California Strategic Growth Council, the County is embarking on a study to determine the locations in the unincorporated County and on County facilities with greatest potential to host distributed-scale renewable energy, including solar. The grant will allow the County to examine current County zoning to determine what changes are required to cite more renewable energy in the County.

Two County initiatives create momentum to deploy more renewable energy in Contra Costa County. First, the County and many of the cities in the County are opting in to community choice energy (CCE) by joining MCE, the first community choice aggregation in California. Included in the March 2017 CCE technical study is an assessment of the solar resources in the County. This assessment will provide the starting point for the Renewable Resource Potential Study described above.

Second, the County is implementing the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, a regional, cluster-based development strategy with a goal of creating 18,000 new jobs by 2035. The Northern Waterfront is comprised of the historic industrial waterfront, nearly 60 miles from Hercules to Oakley. This area contains 61 percent of the County's industrial zoned land, including many large stationary pollution sources. In the CCE technical study, 40 percent of the potential solar energy sites were identified in the Northern Waterfront area.

Contra Costa County is committed to tracking metrics related to solar PV. Our SolSmart application includes metrics on how many rooftop solar PV systems have been installed since the County adopted the streamlined permitting rules mentioned above.

As a participant in the SolSmart program, Contra Costa County will dedicate staff time and resources to work with SolSmart representatives to address solar best practice opportunities. Similarly, the County will work, to the best of its abilities, to implement these best practices. The ultimate goal is to achieve designation through the SolSmart program and lower potential barriers to solar adoption.

We believe the technical assistance from SolSmart will help implement more solar and energy efficient systems in Contra Costa County. We look forward to being a part of the SolSmart designation program and introducing more solar programs with the support of the Department of Energy.

Sincerely,

Federal Glover
Chair, Board of Supervisors