local power

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F.A.Q.: Street Questions

1. Are there enough sunny rooftops in SF? Yes. The “Green Giant” ordinance calls for construction of 104 Megawatts of new distributed generation such as fuel cells and tidal power in San Francisco, including a *minimum* of 31 Megawatts of solar photovoltaicss, in addition to the installation of 107 Megawatts of new energy efficiency/conservation technologies and construction of 150 Megawatts of new wind turbines. Our goal of 50 Megawatts of solar photovoltaics would require the equivalent of 200 warehouse rooftops in the sunny areas of the City. This is only a fraction of the thousands of unused rooftops within the 49 square mile landmass of San Francisco.

2. Will solar be reliable or suffer constant breakdowns? There is nothing more reliable than solar power. The solar power plant will pay for itself in ten to twenty-five years, will have a twenty-five year warranty, and should continue to provide power for years beyond that. Designed, installed, operated and maintained by the City¹s chosen electric service provider, the reliability of all renewable energy systems will be required under the contract¹s agreed upon electricity rates. Solar photovoltaic arrays have no moving parts and do not rely on either transmission lines or distribution systems to operate.

3. Isn’t this all too complex? Energy markets are inherently complex; whether threatened by a rate increase or bailout under regulation or market gaming and price volatility under deregulation, consumers are vulnerable to this complex, even byzantine forces. Community Choice gives us community control over our own energy destiny that is otherwise in the hands of PG&E; it transfers more of the risk to the private sector where it belongs. Fonally, Community Choice gives us the tools to reduce our vulnerability to these forces. By using Community Choice to develop local solar power, other renewable energy resources and conservation, we will give our electricity supply permanent protection against increasingly complex and volatile global fossil fuel markets.

4. Why is this better than PG&E? PG&E is bankrupt and has been bailed out by its ratepayers to the cost of billions of dollars in just the past few years. After the bankruptcy bailout PG&E will continue to operate at risk to its ratepayers. If it needs to be bailed out its customers will be forced to pay again. If it makes bad investments, ratepayers will be required to pay for them. In contrast, the Community Choice Aggregator represents the customer rather than owning the wires and power plants. Its chosen Electric Service Provider will make a commitment to agreed-upon rates and will not be able to increase them. Unlike PG&E, an Electric Service Provider does not own power plants or distribution systems, and has no conflict of interest against developing the decentralized green generation and energy efficiency infrastructure that San Francisco needs to reduce its dependence on the grid.