

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

May 23, 2019

TO: SBCCOG Board of Directors

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, SBCCOG Executive Director

RE: SBCCOG Participation to Become a SolSmart Designated Sub-Regional Agency

Adherence to Strategic Plan

Goal A: Environment, Transportation and Economic Development. Facilitate, implement and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation, and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay.

BACKGROUND

In August 2018, the SBCCOG partnered with EcoMotion (a renewable energy consulting firm) to provide facilitation, outreach, marketing, and promotional services in support of a municipal solar readiness (federal) grant called “SolSmart”. This program is funded through 2019 by the Solar Foundation of America.

The SolSmart program is similar to the SBCCOG’s “Energy Leadership Program,” in that it involves cities accomplishing tasks or goals that result in awarding points which are tabulated for a “Designation Level.” Examples of the tasks (where points are awarded) include:

- Updates to city websites
- Updating permitting/inspection procedures to industry and national “best practice” standards
- Attending free webinar training for city staff and fire personnel
- Attending solar “working group” meetings at the SBCCOG

SolSmart designation levels for cities are: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Cities move through the SolSmart categories by taking actions that help their communities become more solar ready. Participation in SolSmart is one method of implementing the renewable energy strategies in cities’ Climate Action Plans (CAPs) and can also be beneficial when applying for future renewable energy grants/funding. In addition, this program supports the growth of the market for renewable energy in the South Bay.

To date, eight (8) South Bay cities are participating in the SolSmart program (Carson, El Segundo, Hawthorne, Lawndale, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Torrance); additionally, two cities (Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach) have already completed SolSmart designations prior to the SBCCOG grant. Respectively, all eight cities are making progress towards achieving a high-level of Municipal Solar Readiness SolSmart Designation - 4 cities have already achieved a “Gold Designation”. National and local press releases have been circulated to promote the program; respective, cities’ successes; and, the SBCCOG’s role in coordinating these efforts.

DISCUSSION

The role of the SBCCOG was originally intended as one of facilitation, outreach, promotion, and marketing this opportunity. Recently, it was learned that “other government agencies” including Councils of Governments could apply for similar designation. With the Board’s direction, the SBCCOG has the opportunity to receive a sub-regional government SolSmart Designation – an award that complements the SBCCOG’s sustainability vision, goals, and strategies.

The process to successfully accomplish a designation requires the SBCCOG to complete a series of five (5) sub-regional government “pre-requisites” and specific tasks that include, outreach (with our cities) as well as promotion of solar information (through updates to the SBCCOG website).

In general, the SBCCOG’s level of support and commitment to become a “Gold Designated” sub-regional agency would first be expressed in a signed letter of support from the SBCCOG Board called a “Solar Statement.” Attached for your review is the statement.

FUNDING

Any funds needed for the SBCCOG to receive SolSmart Designation will be paid for out of the current grant.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Steering Committee recommends that the SBCCOG Board: 1) direct staff to complete the SolSmart application and 2) affirm the SBCCOG’s commitment to the process by signing the SolSmart Solar Statement (attached).

Prepared by Aaron Baum



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May 24, 2019

The Solar Foundation
1717 Pennsylvania AVE NW, Ste. 750
Washington, DC 20006

Re: SOLAR STATEMENT

Dear Andrea Fox and Zach Greene:

On behalf of South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG), I am proud to announce our commitment to become a SolSmart designated sub-regional agency. In partnership with the SolSmart team and member cities, SBCCOG's dedicated staff members will work to help improve solar market conditions, which may make it faster, easier, and more affordable for South Bay residents and businesses to install solar energy systems. These efforts could also increase the efficiency of local processes related to solar development, which may save our member local governments time and money.

SolSmart builds upon our organization's sustainability vision, goals, and strategies. The SBCCOG will leverage SolSmart to assist our member cities towards the successful implementation of their, respective, renewable energy strategies, adopted as part of their Climate Action Plans (CAP) – helping to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) within the 15 member cities that the SBCCOG serves and the South Bay sub-region of Los Angeles County, at large.

These efforts demonstrate that the SBCCOG is committed to driving continual improvement in the South Bay solar market, and in the process of doing so, all the related areas identified as community priorities in our sub-regional CAP and sustainability efforts.

The SBCCOG is committed to tracking key metrics related to solar energy, such as solar capacity as found in the Los Angeles County Solar Map Application. Additionally, the SBCCOG is committed to including and promoting the Solar Foundation's information about residential solar as part of SBCCOG's Environmental Service Center's community outreach efforts.

Sincerely,

Britt Huff
SBCCOG Chair
Councilmember, City of Rolling Hills Estates

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACTION

Carson El Segundo Gardena Hawthorne Hermosa Beach Inglewood Lawndale Lomita
Manhattan Beach Palos Verdes Estates Rancho Palos Verdes Redondo Beach Rolling Hills
Rolling Hills Estates Torrance Los Angeles District #15 Los Angeles County