

Ballot Simplification Committee
FINAL Approved Digest – August 1, 2008
Approved by: Packard, Fasick, Fraps, Jorgensen

Any Requests for Reconsideration were due by 1:00 p.m. on August 4, 2008

Clean Energy Act

THE WAY IT IS NOW:

The City generates hydroelectric power at its Hetch Hetchy facilities in Tuolumne County. The City uses this power to meet its municipal electric power needs, including MUNI and the airport, and those of other public entities, such as the San Francisco Unified School District. The City sells some Hetch Hetchy electric power to the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts. The City generally does not sell electric power to San Francisco residents and businesses.

The City's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) operates the City's electric power and water utilities. A state-regulated private company, the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), is the primary provider of electric power to San Francisco residents and businesses.

Generally, voter approval is required before a City agency can issue a revenue bond. However, there are some exceptions.

THE PROPOSAL:

Proposition ___ is a Charter Amendment that would:

- require the PUC to evaluate making the City the primary provider of electric power in San Francisco, including a comprehensive study of options for providing clean, secure, cost-effective electricity;
- mandate deadlines for the City to meet its energy needs through clean, renewable power sources; and
- allow the Board of Supervisors to approve the issuance of revenue bonds to pay for any public utility facilities without voter approval.

Proposition ___ would require the PUC to study:

- Various ways of transmitting Hetch Hetchy electric power to the City,
- Electric power transmission and distribution needs in the City,
- Resources needed to meet the demand for electric power in the City,
- Cost-effective options to reduce and off-set greenhouse gas emissions, and
- Costs and benefits of making the City the primary provider of electric power in San Francisco.

The study would also include a workforce development plan to train and place individuals in jobs related to operating or expanding PUC facilities.

The draft study would be reviewed by independent experts and subject to public hearing. The final draft of the study, with recommendations, would be considered by the Board of Supervisors. If the Board found that public interest demands it, Proposition ___ would require the Board to direct the PUC to immediately prepare a plan to acquire, construct or complete the electric system that serves the City.

Proposition ___ would require the PUC to rely on energy efficiency and clean and renewable energy sources, excluding nuclear power, to meet the electricity demand of customers served by the City.

Proposition ___ would mandate deadlines for the City to meet the following energy needs through the use of clean electric power sources:

- By 2012, at least 107 megawatts
- By 2017, at least 51% of the City's electricity needs
- By 2030, at least 75% of the City's electricity needs
- By 2040, 100% or the greatest possible amount of the City's electricity needs

Proposition ___ would require that every two years the PUC file a report with the Board of Supervisors describing its efforts to meet these clean energy requirements. The Board of Supervisors could modify these requirements by a 2/3 vote if it found the change serves the public interest.

Proposition ___ would create an Office of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate to make recommendations about utility rates to the City's PUC. The City Administrator would appoint the Independent Ratepayer Advocate, whose office would have the same powers and duties as the Office of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate described in Proposition [*Letter assigned to Office of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate*]. However, Proposition ___ would make the appointment and removal of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate subject to Board of Supervisors' approval.

Proposition ___ would create a new exception to the voter-approval requirement for the issuance of revenue bonds. This exception would allow the Board of Supervisors to approve the issuance of revenue bonds to pay for public utility facilities, not limited to electricity facilities, without voter approval.

A "YES" VOTE MEANS: If you vote "yes," you want to change the Charter to require the City to:

- evaluate making the City the primary provider of electric power in San Francisco, including a comprehensive study of options for providing clean, secure, cost-effective electricity;
- consider options to provide energy to San Francisco residents, businesses and City departments;

- meet certain deadlines for serving energy needs through clean power sources;
- establish a new Office of the Independent Ratepayer Advocate to make recommendations about utility rates to the City's PUC; and
- allow the Board of Supervisors to approve the issuance of revenue bonds to pay for any public utility facilities without voter approval.

A “NO” VOTE MEANS: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make these changes to the Charter.

word count: 763 [suggested word limit: 300]