

Disclosures Regarding Renewable Energy*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest

On: Thursday, August 6, 2015

Members: Packard, Fasick, Fraps, Jorgensen, Unruh

Word count: 514 (suggested 300-word limit)

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 3:45 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4, 2015

The Way It Is Now: San Francisco and other local governments are allowed by state law to purchase and generate electricity to sell to residential and business customers.

San Francisco has created CleanPowerSF, a program to purchase, generate and sell electricity. CleanPowerSF has not yet begun to sell electricity to customers, so most San Francisco residents and businesses currently purchase their electricity from Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), a private company. San Francisco residents and businesses will be able to choose whether to purchase electricity from PG&E or CleanPowerSF.

The City generates hydroelectric power at its Hetch Hetchy facilities in Tuolumne County and uses this power to meet most of its municipal power needs. The City does not sell this electricity to most San Francisco residents or businesses.

State law requires all retail electricity suppliers to disclose to customers the sources of power being provided, including renewable energy resources. Renewable resources include biomass, solar thermal, photovoltaic, wind, geothermal, solid waste conversion, landfill gas, ocean wave, ocean thermal, and tidal current.

Current City law does not define “renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity.”

The State requires that a certain percentage of the electricity provided to customers must come from “eligible renewable energy resources,” which include renewable resources located in the Western United States, Canada, and Mexico. San Francisco is allowed to use power from its Hetch Hetchy facilities to meet its required renewable resource percentage.

Under State law, “eligible renewable energy resources” are classified into three different categories, depending primarily on when and where the electricity is generated.

The Proposal: Proposition G would define “renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity” as electricity from only one of the three categories of “eligible renewable energy resources.” “Renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity” would be:

- electricity obtained exclusively from renewable resources located within or adjacent to the California border, with the exception of certain resources such as rooftop solar panels in San Francisco; or
- electricity generated by The City’s Hetch Hetchy facilities, but not electricity generated from other large hydroelectric facilities.

This definition would apply only to San Francisco’s CleanPowerSF program; other sellers of electricity in San Francisco would continue to follow the State definition.

Proposition G would require the City to inform customers and potential customers of CleanPowerSF of the planned percentage of types of “renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity” to be provided in every communication sent to customers and potential customers.

CleanPowerSF would not be allowed to market, advertise or make any public statement that its electricity is “clean” or “green” unless the electricity is “renewable, greenhouse gas-free electricity” as defined in this measure.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to:

- define "renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity" to mean electricity derived exclusively from certain renewable resources located within or adjacent to the California border or electricity derived from Hetch Hetchy, with the exception of electricity from other types of resources such as rooftop solar and other large hydroelectric facilities;
- require CleanPowerSF to inform customers and potential customers of the planned percentage of "renewable, greenhouse-gas free electricity" to be provided; and
- prohibit CleanPowerSF from marketing, advertising or making any public statement that its electricity is "clean" or "green" unless the electricity is "renewable, greenhouse gas-free electricity" as defined in this measure.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to impose these regulations.