



**TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:**

DATE: July 7, 2015

**SUBJECT: APPROVE THE CITY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SUNSHARES RESIDENTIAL SOLAR COST REDUCTION PROGRAM**

**Report in Brief**

SunShares is a residential solar photovoltaic (PV) bulk purchase program that is available to eligible residents in Contra Costa County. Several Contra Costa Cities have or are considering joining this program. To join the SunShares program, the participating City agrees to help market the program to their residents through articles in the City newsletter, City website and other means.

In brief, the SunShares program assists homeowners to install solar energy in their homes by using a group purchase process to provide a 15% discount over other providers, and provides all the support and technical assistance needed by customers. The SunShares program coordinator is asking each City participant to confirm their participation by Council Resolution so that their residents may be eligible for federal tax credits that will expire by the end of 2016. The Policy Development and Internal Operations Committee (Grayson, Hoffmeister) discussed this program at the Committee meeting on June 11<sup>th</sup> and its benefits relative to the City's Climate Action Plan and recommended approval to the City Council.

**Background**

SunShares is an outreach program that provides homeowners with lower cost installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) cells on their homes, and it provides technical assistance to answer any solar questions homeowners may have. It uses a group purchase model to achieve a discount off the market price of solar installations. Participants in the SunShares program have received a 10-15% savings from the average market price for solar installations in the Bay Area. For example, the cost for SunShares solar installations in San Mateo is \$3.50 per watt, while the average statewide cost has been \$5.51 per watt. For a typical residential system sized at 5 kilowatts, the installation cost through SunShares would be about \$17,500 (at \$3.50/watt) versus \$27,550 (at \$5.51/watt). In addition to this type of savings, there is a federal tax credit of 30% that the program participants can utilize through 2016.

**Discussion**

The SunShares residential solar PV bulk purchase program will be administered by Vote Solar

Initiative (VSI), a nonprofit organization devoted to supporting solar energy policies and programs. The City of Walnut Creek contracted directly with VSI in May, and Walnut Creek will be the managing agency in Contra Costa County. VSI issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in June and solar energy vendors will be evaluated in July by a review committee with representatives from each participating city. Each city will be expected to market the program to its residents. From August through November the registration period to purchase a solar installation will be open, and outreach events to residents will be held by the vendor selected by VSI. Installations will begin in this period and continue through the end of 2016.

SunShares is a bulk or group purchasing program, and differs from the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) programs which are currently authorized in Concord using the vendors Hero and Figtree. The PACE program is a financing tool that homeowners or business owners can use to help pay for energy efficiency, solar installation, or water conservation upgrades to their homes, through annual property tax assessments. Those residents participating in the SunShares program may use the City's PACE vendors to finance a discounted solar installation, or other financing mechanisms. City staff will work with VSI to advertise the PACE financing options as part of support for the SunShares Program.

To achieve the program goals VSI will:

1. Facilitate selecting one or more vendors for residential solar installations through an RFP process (with one or two representatives from each City on the evaluation committee).
2. After one or more vendors have been selected, produce outreach materials, host workshops, and register participants.
3. Provide the contact information of registered participants to the vendors to begin the process of implementing site assessments and completing the installation contracts.
4. Maintain oversight of all installations to ensure that they comply with the program agreements.

The Participating Cities will:

1. Be responsible for identifying marketing opportunities through use of the City's newsletter, City e-news, the City's annual report, website, etc.
2. Making direct connections between VSI and potential customers by referring any interested callers to VSI.

In addition, the Mayor would need to appoint one or two Concord residents to serve on a temporary ad-hoc evaluation committee in July to vet and select potential solar installation vendors.

If the City of Concord participates in this program, along with Lafayette, Fremont, Walnut Creek, and other cities, there should be an increase in residential solar installations in Contra Costa County, and in Concord. This would have an overall beneficial impact on the City's Climate Action Plan goals and housing stock.

The outreach materials for the program will be developed once it is confirmed which cities and employers will partner in the Contra Costa County program. An RFP will be issued to select a solar installer, and then marketing materials will be distributed to all partners to share with residents, employers, etc. VSI will be the point of contact listed on the marketing materials to handle questions.

At the June 11<sup>th</sup> Policy Development and Infrastructure Committee meeting, Chair Grayson recommended that any interested local business be offered the opportunity to be considered as a vendor. A list of Concord contractors was submitted for the RFP distribution. In addition, the City will require an indemnification clause to ensure there is no liability to the City to join the program.

**Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact to the City would be negligible. It would require staff time to ensure that the marketing materials are reviewed and included in the City's newsletter and posted on the City's website and through flyers at the Permit Center Counter.

**Public Contact**

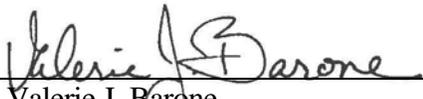
Posting of the City Council Agenda.

**Recommendation for Action**

Staff recommends approval of Attachment 1, City Council Resolution No. 15-48 authorizing the City of Concord's participation in the SunShares Residential Solar Installation Program.

Prepared by: Laura Simpson  
Planning Manager  
[laura.simpson@cityofconcord.org](mailto:laura.simpson@cityofconcord.org)

Reviewed by: Victoria Walker  
Dir. of Comm. & Econ. Dev.  
[victoria.walker@cityofconcord.org](mailto:victoria.walker@cityofconcord.org)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Valerie J. Barone  
City Manager  
[valerie.barone@cityofconcord.org](mailto:valerie.barone@cityofconcord.org)

Attachment 1: City Council Resolution

Intentionally left blank

**BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CONCORD  
COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF CONCORD CALIFORNIA,  
CONSENTING**

**Resolution No. 15-48**

**WHEREAS**, on September 27, 2006, AB32 was signed into law which established the goal of reducing the state’s greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 23, 2013, the Concord City Council adopted the Citywide Climate Action Plan (CAP); and

**WHEREAS**, the CAP recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability and encourages community awareness, responsibility, participation and education to promote an environmentally sustainable community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Concord is committed to development of renewable energy generation and energy efficiency improvements, reduction of greenhouse gases, and protection of the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2015 the City of Walnut Creek invited Concord to participate in the East Bay SunShares Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the City wishes to reduce the cost of solar installations for homeowners, inform and educate homeowners, and increase the number of rooftop solar installations which will help Concord meet State goals set out in AB32 and the goals outlined in the City’s CAP.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CONCORD DOES  
RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** This City Council hereby approves participation in the East Bay SunShares program and authorizes the City Manager to send a Letter of Commitment to the City of Walnut Creek.

**Section 2.** This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and adoption.

//

//

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the City Council of the City of Concord on July 7, 2015, by the following vote:

- AYES:** Councilmembers -
- NOES:** Councilmembers -
- ABSTAIN:** Councilmembers -
- ABSENT:** Councilmembers -

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing Resolution No. 15-48 was duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Concord on July 7, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joelle Fockler, CMC  
City Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark S. Coon  
City Attorney