

Equitable Information Sharing: Increasing Access to Solar Resources in Southern California's South Bay Region

CASE STUDY: California's South Bay region is one of the nation's most ethnically and economically diverse. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the City of Los Angeles, the cities served by the South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) are home to pristine beaches and business parks, oil refineries and the Madrona Preserve, and now to more than half of the State of California's SolSmart designated cities.

In the past year, eight South Bay Cities and the SBCCOG have all earned SolSmart designation, an effort which has effectively doubled the number of designated cities within California.

In total, six cities earned Gold designation – Rancho Palos Verdes, Manhattan Beach, Carson, Torrance, Gardena and El Segundo – two cities earned Silver – Hawthorne and Palos Verdes Estates – five cities earned special recognition awards, and the SBCCOG became the first regional organization in the State of California to earn Gold.



SBCCOG Service Territory

“We knew that SolSmart would serve as an impetus to further develop existing educational and technical assistance tools,” said Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director of the SBCCOG, “but when the SBCCOG began to tackle the designation process, we reconceived how those tools would be delivered to our residents. Designation resulted in a relaunch of the [Renewable South Bay](#) website and a renewed focus on the collaborative aspect of our environmental mission. The SBCCOG approach has become a model to the 47 other councils of governments throughout California that want to advance local solar initiatives.”

Even with 1 million solar installations across California, the road to achieving the State's solar deployment goals remains a long one, and residential rooftop solar has an outside role in achieving those goals. Of the challenges for promoting single-family rooftop solar adoption at the municipal level, one is for cities to develop a unified messaging strategy which not only provides information but also empowers residents. The SBCCOG and its member cities addressed this by launching solar landing pages on their websites, thereby expanding access to information for residents through online publication of checklists, permit forms, interactive maps, financing and consumer protection resources, and solar contractor databases.

SOLSMART



SOUTH BAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

For residents seeking more or who may be without Internet access, the cities of Carson and Manhattan Beach hosted public residential solar workshops which educated homeowners about the opportunities, benefits and challenges of putting solar on their home. Residential solar presentations were delivered by EcoMotion, the South Bay's SolSmart Advisor, and SBCCOG representatives shared its menu of solar resources with attendees. Each event was well-attended and in total reached more than 100 South bay residents who may not otherwise have received this information.

Both attendance levels and feedback received during the Q&A portions of the workshops indicated a need for more public resources. What's more, feedback from individuals who did not attend a workshop, including several calls from

representatives of other cities seeking resources for their residents, indicated that the need was not isolated to a single community, but encompassed the Southern California at large. As such, SolSmart was instrumental to efforts which improved interdepartmental collaboration, centralized public information, and delivered a clear message to residents.

In the end, the SBCCOG and its member cities developed a comprehensive toolkit which is as varied and diverse as the communities they represent, but they are just getting started. The South Bay is abuzz with solar. The SBCCOG is motivating its remaining stakeholders, member cities are delivering valuable tools, and residents are more prepared than ever for their clean energy future.



City of Carson Director of Public Works, Dr. Maria Slaughter; Los Angeles County Public Works District Manager, Michael Dorta; Council Member, Jim Dear; Council Member, Lula Davis-Holmes; Sustainability Administrator – Utilities, Reata Kulcsar; SolSmart Advisor, Shaun Miller; Mayor, Albert Robles; Mayor Pro Tempore, Cedric Hicks; Council Member, Jawane Hilton; Director of Community Development, Saied Naaseh.



City of Rancho Palos Verdes Senior Planner, Octavio Silva; Director of Community Development, Ara Mirhanian; Deputy Director of Community Development, So Kim; Senior Planner, John Alvarez.

Cases study prepared by EcoMotion in partnership with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments.