**Southern California county and cities leading the way on clean energy**

Ventura County is the making history as the first county in the U.S. to set a renewable energy default of 100% for all of its constituents. Ventura County is a member of the newly formed community choice energy provider, Clean Power Alliance. Following only Portola Valley in Northern California, which last year was the first city to set its default at 100%, the cities of Ventura, Ojai, South Pasadena, Culver City, Santa Monica, Rolling Hills Estates, and West Hollywood, are setting the new standard for sustainability by making their renewable energy defaults 100% as well. Several other cities could be joining them this week, including Malibu, Thousand Oaks, Hawaiian Gardens, and Oxnard.

When service rolls out in the first half of 2019, Clean Power Alliance (CPA) will be the largest community choice aggregator in California, serving three million people across 31 communities in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. CPA procures the electricity, while SoCal Edison (SCE) maintains the distribution and transmission lines and handles billing. CPA offers three renewable energy rate plans – Lean Power (36%), Clean Power (50%) and 100% Green Power (100%).

Those member agencies which have selected a lower renewable default (36% or 50%), but could yet choose to elevate it to 100% before the October 31 deadline, include: unincorporated Los Angeles County, Agoura Hills, Alhambra, Arcadia, Beverly Hills, Calabasas, Camarillo, Claremont, Carson, Downey, Hawthorne, Manhattan Beach, Moorpark, Paramount, Redondo Beach, Sierra Madre, Simi Valley, Temple City, and Whittier.

Customers are automatically enrolled in their city’s default plan, but can choose another plan at any time. For those municipalities with the 100% default, CARE and other low-income customers will have the plan benefit at no additional cost. The projected cost difference for the 100% renewable option is 7-9% more than SCE’s base rate (which is 34% renewable), but the renewable content is 66% more.  That’s a compelling return, and a small price to pay for the long-term benefits.  While there’s a slight rate savings of 0-1% with the 50% renewable option and 1-2% with the 36% renewable option, there’s far less renewable content in those, so we must consider the costs associated with externalities like more polluting emissions.  Emissions are costly to our society and must be factored into the decision-making.  The perception of saving a buck or two in the short term is a dangerous illusion.

The importance of the default decision has become particularly relevant in light of the alarming news from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which issued a dire warning that governments, at all levels, everywhere, must take "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes" to dramatically cut emissions within the next 12 years, if we hope to avoid climate catastrophe.  The stakes couldn’t be higher – life as we know it is in grave danger. We do not have the luxury of time anymore to take small incremental steps, the magnitude of the crisis necessitates swift action at the public policy level.  CPA member cities have an immediate and precedent-setting opportunity before them now, to do the right thing on a local level, by setting the renewable energy default at 100%.  In so doing, our communities will benefit from a dramatic reduction in polluting emissions. This is especially significant for the Los Angeles area, which has recently returned to setting records for unhealthy air quality.

The unincorporated Los Angeles County accounts for the largest energy load use in CPA, approximately 25%, and it currently has its default at 50% renewable. If the Board of Supervisors would embrace this historic moment to lead on clean energy, it will give people much-needed hope, that governments acknowledge the seriousness of our climate crisis and are willing to take the bold action necessary to confront it. Southern California is a beacon. We are thought leaders that set a tone and influence the culture of our country and the entire world.

For our elected representatives who have embraced 100% clean energy, we commend you for your visionary leadership. And, you will want to be on the right side of history with this one. When the day comes when our children or grandchildren ask, as they surely will, “What did you do to help stop climate change?”, I hope we have a good answer. The 100% renewable default is a tangible, easy and impactful way to do that something, right now.

To learn more about efforts to support the 100% default, visit www.greenbydefault.org.

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Governor Jerry Brown just signed landmark legislation committing our state to 100% clean energy by 2045.  Now, consider this – the 100% default gives our communities an opportunity to achieve that goal 25 years ahead of schedule!  Simply by setting the default at 100%, as early as the middle of next year when service begins, we will be powered by close to 100% renewable, a huge improvement from the roughly 30% renewable mix that is standard today.  I can’t think of a more tangible, immediate, or easy way to make this kind of substantial leap forward.  It’ll take much more time, effort and expense to get there otherwise.

We will all be Suffering the impact of our inaction

Compelled because importance of urgency of this issue

Should be creating a greater sense of urgency among all of us to accelerate our efforts to stop and reverse climate change

Doing too little and will result in being too late

Can expect more widespread drought….

Not that far away

Significant positive impact on transition to clean energy and reducing contribution to climate change

Additional costs must be taken into when deciding between clean and fossil fuels

Rates coming down steadily

Help grow the market, resulting in more and cheaper sources

As leaders, must be willing to make forward looking commitments – as scientists we are done, it’s in the hands of government

Help lead us into a clean energy future

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he renewable energy default is the rate plan that customers are enrolled in automatically, but customers can choose another plan according to their own preferences or priorities, no one is locked into anything. However, since people typically stay with the default, setting it at 100% will achieve a dramatic reduction in pollution. The default decision is a simple yet extremely effective way to affect change at a higher policy level, rather than relying on individuals to make good choices. Since we must swiftly transition away from destructive fossil fuels to clean renewable energy, then the defaults should support that. How unfortunate it will be if the decision-makers succumb to shortsighted thinking and miss this low hanging fruit. Several of these communities have recognized the opportunity and are going for 100%; I commend them for their bold leadership and vision. Hopefully others will take note.

We all recognize the importance of goal-setting. We’ll get to 100% renewable a whole lot faster if we set that as our goal. But if we aim low, at 36% or 50%, that’s where we’ll end up, and then what? Why would we want continue contributing to the climate problem and further endanger our communities, when we can be part of the solution?

To elected representatives, please lead, and help protect your local communities and this beautiful planet Earth we all get to call home. When our children and grandchildren ask, as they surely will, “What did you do to help stop climate change?”, I hope we have a good answer.