

# Solar for All

California Environmental Justice Alliance  
www.caleja.org

Small Scale Distributed Generation FIT Proposal

## Green Jobs

Trained community members are ready to work. We need jobs, jobs, and more jobs.

## Clean Air

Communities suffering from the dirtiest air deserve clean air from green energy resources.

## All Neighborhoods

We want to see solar in everyone's backyard. Anyone who wants green energy deserves the opportunity to have it installed.

## The Problem:

### Current Solar Programs and Models Do Not Benefit Most Vulnerable Communities

Low-income, communities of color have shouldered the burden of living adjacent to polluting fossil fuel industries for decades and have suffered economically, environmentally, socially and physically as a result.

Governor's Brown's commitment to building 12,000 MW of new Renewable Distributed Generation (RDG) represents an investment of tens of billions of dollars in California's clean electric power infrastructure. "Who benefits" from this investment is not a matter of indifference. In a time of high unemployment and high poverty rates, investment in communities with the greatest economic and social needs is an imperative.

California currently has a program created by SB 32 (Negrete-McLeod), known as a "feed-in tariff" (FiT), that allows eligible customers to enter into standard contracts with their utilities to sell the electricity produced by small renewable energy systems from 0-3 MW. However, SB 32 benefits only 2 to 3 MW renewable energy systems due to one-size-fits-all pricing.

With SB 32 FiT and other programs focusing on 2-20 MW, the most vulnerable communities are left behind. The larger projects do not integrate well into poor urban and rural communities.

The unemployment rates continue to rise among low-income communities of color. Although many community members participate in and graduate from green jobs training programs, there are no local green jobs available to these trainees. Sadly, these trained workers are "all dressed up, with nowhere to go."



## Solution: Communities Need Local Solar with a Feed-in Tariff

Low-income communities of color need renewable energy systems that are 1.5 MW or less. A small-scale feed-in tariff program for renewable distributed generation allows rooftop solar that can be sited in low-income urban and rural communities. Small-scale projects create jobs, reduce energy bills, generate wealth, revitalize neighborhoods, and give people some control over their energy future.



CBE and APEN members (photo courtesy of CBE)

## Action: Legislation supporting rooftop solar feed-in tariffs

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) proposes that legislation be introduced in 2012 supporting small-scale renewable distributed generation (RDG) through feed-in tariffs. This small-scale RDG legislation will give teeth to the concept of investing in communities most in need.

This legislation specifically focuses on Governor Brown's proposal to create 12,000 MW of distributed generation in California.

In the 12,000 MW goal, we recommend three components:

**1 - Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) for small-scale projects:** A small-scale FiT allows solar installation in all communities. Renewable energy producers (which can be multi-family building owners, warehouse owners, small business owners, and farmers) get compensated for the cost of the renewable energy (solar) with a small, reasonable profit. This incentive has spurred dramatic growth of solar around the world.

A FiT requires utilities to purchase electricity from renewable energy sources, thus accomplishing our clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Of the proposed 12,000 MW of the Governor's RDG program, 3,000 MW should be allocated to a FiT program. This FiT program should have a capacity of not more than 1.5 MW.

**2 - Renewables located in low-income communities:** Of the 3,000 MW FiT program, at least 1,000 MW should benefit low-income and environmental justice communities.

**3 - Local Hire Requirement:** A preference for local hire in "low-income communities of color" would provide jobs where they are most desperately needed. A FiT alone will not guarantee jobs or economic benefits for our community members. The new law should require "economic benefits for low-income communities" – including the "multiplier effect" where solar development in poor urban and rural areas spurs further business and economic activity in the community.

The legislation can provide ways to bring down the cost of solar so that small RDG systems are installed in all communities. We can also include specific goals to support domestic upstream manufacturing, targeted hiring, innovation, education, etc. to local communities, especially underemployed communities.

For more information, contact Strela Cervas, Co-Coordinator with CEJA at (323) 826-9771 x104.

*The California Environmental Justice's mission is to strengthen the progressive environmental justice movement in California. By building on the local organizing efforts and advocacy successes of our member organizations, we will achieve state policy change. We are working to achieve environmental justice by organizing in low-income and people of color communities - those most impacted by environmental hazards - and by pushing for policies at the state, regional and local levels that protect public health. Our focus is on California's urban and rural communities in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, the San Joaquin Valley, the Los Angeles region, the Inland Valleys, and the San Diego / Tijuana border region.*