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# Our City Update

Volume 1, Issue 3 Pre-Election 2005

## Our Second Year

### Building A Progressive Future For San Francisco

Thanks to help from supporters like yourself, Our City has been extremely active in the past 12 months. Starting with the November 2004 election, we built a solid foundation on our previous victories for environmental protection, better transit, affordable housing, and neighborhood empowerment.

### Successes Over The Past Year

- Last November election, we helped to return a majority of progressives to the Board of Supervisors; a vital element to our continued progress on social and environmental justice in San Francisco.
- We lent a hand in the struggle to get locked out local hotel workers back to work and help them fight for a better

contract. Though back on the job, they still need support in the contract fight.

- Early in 2005, the Police and Planning Commissions were removed from SF government television, hiding them from crucial public scrutiny. Our City played a key role in returning the hearings to television immediately.
- We also joined the campaign to save the historic Harding movie theater from being demolished and replaced with condominiums. The project was returned to the Planning Commission so be on the look out for your chance to insist that the Commission give permanent protection to the Harding.
- On the State level, we helped push for passage of universal affordable health care for all Californians. The bill has just passed the Senate and will face a tough fight in the Assembly next year.



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## Urgent Campaigns: Breaking PG&E's Monopoly & Stopping The Governor's November Sneak Election

### Polluting PG&E Monopoly OUT / Local Clean Power IN Project Nears Final Vote At The Board Of Supervisors

Since April 2004, Our City's central campaign has been to bring online the local renewable energy independence that San Francisco voters overwhelmingly approved in 2001. After that vote, San Francisco was to have become the most renewable energy powered city in the world by this year. But San Francisco's Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) never started the project, and has even opposed efforts to bring it forward. However, a valiant coalition of groups has at last overcome SFPUC's interference, and the new **Community Choice Energy Plan** to end PG&E's monopoly and transition the City to renewables, is nearly ready. The Board of Supervisors will vote this month! **Comments to Supervisors and the Mayor are vital. Call Supervisors at: 554-5184, and the Mayor at: 554-6141.**

### Schwarzenegger's November 8th Special Election Could Strip Away Basic Civil, Labor, And Consumer Rights!

It is critical that all voters educate themselves about this blatant right wing attack on the fundamental rights and protections of Californians, and **Vote this November 8th.**

Co-sponsored by the Governor, Props 73 - 78 would:

- Limit abortion rights and endanger pregnant teens lives
- Make new teachers wait 5 years for tenure job protection
- Hamstring labor unions from taking part in elections
- Allow the Governor to unilaterally cut State spending
- Allow early voter district changes favoring Republicans
- Allow drug companies to continue gouging consumers

To learn more about this alarming special election attack on California freedoms, see our **Core Report** on page 3.

# Victory For Solar Power

## Mayor Directs Solar Panels On All City Buildings

Since April of 2004, Our City staff and volunteers have gathered over 1,000 constituent letters to the Mayor asking him to insist that the City fulfill the green energy measures passed by voters in 2001, by starting a massive ramp up of solar, wind and other renewables projects in San Francisco.

During the year and a half following the letter gathering kick off, we came to seriously wonder whether the Mayor was listening. By September 2005, he had only announced one significant solar project on City facilities; specifically the upcoming solar paneling of the Southeast Waste Water Treatment Plant. While representing progress, this single project amounted to only a tiny fraction of the renewable energy construction that voters demanded years ago.

But last month the Mayor finally took a strong step forward, announcing during his State of the City address that he has called for solar panels to be erected on *all* City buildings.

## Ongoing Campaign: MUNI Transit Crisis

Last May, Our City signed on as a member of the Coalition for Transit Justice. The Coalition was formed to reverse the collapse in performance of the City's MUNI transit agency.

This year, facing budget cuts, rising fuel prices and a history of bad management, MUNI has resorted to punitive and reactionary anti-rider policies, instead of making sensible decisions to find new funding and help the system recover.

MUNI has balanced its strained budget on the backs of the poor by raising fares, treating riders like criminals as they board and leave buses and trains, and by cutting service.

Since the crisis began, MUNI has raised fares for riders twice, bringing them to an unprecedented \$1.50 per ride, and is even considering raising the fare to \$2.00 per ride!

History shows that fare hikes and service cuts, rather than generating funds, turn riders off to transit as it becomes ever more expensive, crowded and slow. This can even result in *decreased* funding, throwing transit into a downward failure spiral from which it can't escape. Service cuts also mean that MUNI workers will be laid off and fired to save money, and that waits for buses and trains will grow even longer.

MUNI has become so paranoid of riders boarding without paying through the back doors of buses, that it has resorted to prison like tactics to police the system. (Note that for

### Election Reminder

#### Instant Run Off (Ranked Choice) Voting

This November, San Francisco voters will once again be able to participate in Instant Run Off Voting (IRV). IRV saves the City millions of dollars by making special run off elections unnecessary. It also eliminates the 'spoiler' effect in local races, by ensuring that if there is no majority winner, and your first choice is not among the top vote getters, your vote is transferred to your second choice. This enables you to *first* vote for who you really want in office and still cast a vote for a 'safe' choice in case your chosen candidate doesn't prevail.

Each voter is also allowed a third choice. The vote transfer process proceeds from first, to second, to third choices until one candidate receives a majority.

**This election you can vote your conscience by *ranking* your choices for Assessor and Treasurer!**



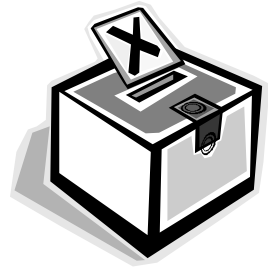
many years drivers have routinely allowed riders to board through back doors, especially when buses are crowded, because this greatly speeds up the system.)

Some highlights of MUNI's overreactions include:

- MUNI workers being employed as untrained security guards at bus stops to keep riders from boarding through back doors. In one instance a worker grabbed and assaulted a rider.
- At some stops, *all* riders being forced to exit through front doors (to keep riders from boarding in the back) heavily delaying buses.
- Drivers so under pressure from superiors to force every rider to board in front, that they close back doors too quickly, causing the doors to close violently on people exiting the bus. Our City staff have personally seen this occur on at least four occasions in the last few months.

These and other unacceptable conditions make it crucial that voters turn out and vote 'YES' for local Prop D on the November 8th ballot, and support recent efforts by Board of Supervisors president Aaron Peskin to raise downtown corporate transit fees to properly fund MUNI.

# Core Report: Governor Schwarzenegger's Sneak Election Attack This Week



## Your Vote This Tuesday, November 8th Is Critical!

This Tuesday, California voters will face one of the most important elections in the State's history. Since being elected, Governor Schwarzenegger's office, taking its cues from the neo-con Bush Whitehouse, has attacked environmental, labor and civil rights protections with a vengeance.

Prime examples of this assault are Schwarzenegger's veto of the Marriage Equality bill that would have given equal marriage rights to same sex couples, and his recent moves on energy to place dangerous, polluting liquid natural gas terminals off California's coast, and build power lines to the Southwest U.S. to pipe in huge amounts of electricity produced by burning coal; one of the most polluting, toxic forms of energy production.

Now Governor Schwarzenegger is seeking to further mirror the Bush administration's radical right wing agenda, by bringing reactionary attacks on civil, worker, and voter rights, as well as draconian budget cuts, to the November 8th California ballot.

## Propositions 73 through 78, all endorsed by the Governor's office, contain these attacks:

**PROP 73** - Forces doctors to notify parents and then wait 48 hours before giving abortions to pregnant minors placing young women who have abusive or anti-choice parents in the potentially life threatening situation of choosing between family conflict and illegal abortion.

**PROP 74** - Makes new teachers wait *five years* before being granted tenure job protection. This will have the effect of placing downward wage pressure on the pay of new teachers, who are *already* not paid enough for their hard work.

**PROP 75** - Plays an unfair shell game with election involvement on behalf of labor, forcing unions to go through ridiculous red tape seeking approval from current memberships, to take part in political campaigns in their favor. This requirement would be similar to compelling Our City to delay its work and spend precious funds going back to you, its members, before taking important action in the next election to represent your views when we *already* got that approval by asking you to sign as supporters and renew your memberships in the first place.

**PROP 76** - Changes the rules for school funding so that the Governor can cut education spending even further than it has been cut already, and even worse, gives the Governor's office powers to declare fiscal emergencies and make *unilateral* spending cuts in the California budget without seeking approval from anyone!

**PROP 77** - Forces immediate election boundary re-districting favoring the Republican Party, and also takes the alarming step of placing *three* appointed judges in complete control of election re-districting. A look back at the U.S. Supreme Court's role in the 2000 presidential election is the only proof necessary that small panels of appointed judges should not be placed in charge of our elections.

**PROP 78** - A sham initiative which pretends to bring lower prices to consumers for prescription drugs, when in fact, it is nothing more than a *voluntary* system supported by the very drug companies that are currently gouging us to make record profits. **Vote YES on PROP 79 instead**, an alternative written specifically to make *real* cuts in prescription drug prices. (*Election information continued on next page.*)

## Our City - November '05 Election Recommendations - Vote This Tuesday, November 8th!

State Ballot Measures: **NO ON 73 THRU 78! Yes on 79** (See Core Report On Page 3)

### Local Ballot Measures

**Prop A YES** Badly needed funds for City College.

**Prop B (no recommendation)** Crucial street/sidewalk repair funded by costly bonds. Car fees & fuel tax would be better funding.

**Prop C YES** Gives full funding to the San Francisco Ethics Commission helping it to become a strong and independent body.

**Prop D YES** Divides appointments to the MTA Board between the Board of Supervisors and Mayor, so MUNI can be reformed.

**Prop E YES** Moves votes for Assessor-Recorder and Public Defender to November, ensuring better attended elections for each.

**Prop F NO** Wastes funds. Maintains and repairs firehouses and equipment that have been made obsolete by newer technology.

**Prop G YES** Makes best deal possible to keep MLK drive from being expanded to excessive traffic in Golden Gate Park.

**Prop H YES** Bans handguns in San Francisco, making our streets, homes, and children safer.

**Prop I YES** Opposes military recruiters in our children's schools. Calls for scholarships and training for young people instead.

### Local Candidate Races

*No recommendations. Our City only supports or opposes candidates when clearly vital to progressive goals.*



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