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# Our City Update

Volume 2, Issue 1 June Primary 2006

## Solar & Wind Power!

### Supervisors Will Soon Vote On A 50% Clean Energy Powered City

Since April of 2004, Our City has been doing heavy, on the ground grassroots organizing, to get Mayor Newsom and our Supervisors to insist that the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) end its delays and help us build the biggest municipal renewable energy project in the world for local electricity.

Because of supporters like you, we have been able to gather and send more than a thousand of your hand written letters to the Mayor, and hundreds of such letters to the Board of Supervisors.

In 2005, we expanded our campaign to join with the organization Local Power and Supervisors Tom Ammiano and Ross Mirkarimi, to help them push for the Community Choice Energy project -

which will break the PG&E monopoly and run San Francisco on 50% clean renewable energy in the next decade.

Later in 2005, Greenpeace and Sierra Club joined forces with Local Power and Our City to found the Community Choice Energy Alliance and so build a strong, well organized public campaign to win this fight. Over twenty other groups have since joined the campaign.

#### Mayor Newsom Responds!

After over two years of our grassroots campaigning, Mayor Newsom has at last responded to our efforts and agreed to make key start-up funding available for the project, preparing the way for a likely July victory as the Community Choice ordinance goes before the San Francisco Board of Supervisors for a final vote!



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## Voter Alert! This Tuesday's Election Ballot: Prop B Is Vital Tenant & TIC Buyer Protection



### Prop B Defends Both Tenants and Tenancy-In-Common Buyers From Unfair Evictions and Exploitation

Recently, Mayor Newsom vetoed legislation sponsored by Supervisor Chris Daly that would have given important protection to both Tenancy-In-Common (TIC) buyers and tenants in San Francisco. (In TICs, consumers join and share risk to buy a small set of apartments as their jointly owned homes; the only way that many San Franciscans can afford to become home owners.)

Currently realtors are only required to notify TIC buyers just before they sign a contract, if a senior/disabled or Ellis Act tenant eviction was used to prepare the property for sale. This information is crucial to TIC buyers because many TICs that have previously had such evictions are barred by law from being later turned into condos. When a TIC unit owner retires, the ability to refinance the TIC as a

condo could be vital to making retirement affordable. But under current law, TIC buyers are notified of problem evictions so late in the process, that they are at undue risk of getting stuck with such units, having already made loan plans and other commitments toward buying the property.

By requiring much earlier notice of problem evictions Daly's legislation would have been like a preemptive lemon law for TIC deals which look good on the outside, but under the hood, carry unacceptable financial risk.

*The good news* is that this lemon law for raw deal TICs is now on the June ballot as Proposition B.

To make sure that TIC buyers can protect themselves, and to discourage real estate speculators from unfairly evicting the elderly, disabled, and other vulnerable tenants, vote YES on Prop B. *(see other election tips on page 4)*

## Nov '05 Election Victories

### Governor's Special Election Down In Flames Voters Reject Handguns & Military Recruiters

In the Fall of 2005, Our City lent a hand to help hundreds of groups and organizers battle the special election initiatives called for by Governor Schwarzenegger which would have restricted abortion, weakened unions, disempowered our teachers and schools, hurt prescription drug consumers, and redrawn election districts in favor of the Republican Party.

In a huge victory, voters rejected *all* of Schwarzenegger's pet initiatives, and also rejected every measure on the ballot, sending a strong message to future governors that California will not tolerate the calling of special interest elections that cost tax payers millions of dollars and waste our time.

**Locally-** we supported winning measures banning handguns in San Francisco, stating that it is the policy of the city that Military Recruiters are not welcome in our schools, and keeping Golden Gate Park free from expanded car traffic.

## Key June Ballot Measure For Better Transit

### Prop C Will Make Transit Policy More Accountable

Over the past decade, policy makers with the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) have undertaken the grinding task of helping bay area communities to reach a solid agreement on finishing the construction of the Transbay Terminal; a transit hub that will bring together all of our regional transit systems, and eventually even statewide high speed rail, into one central downtown San Francisco transfer station.

Finalizing the project is crucial to making mass transit an easy and desirable alternative to driving cars, giving a big boost to environmental protections, and setting a high west coast standard for a transportation system that will free itself from dependence on fossil fuels, and the inevitable military and economic conflicts waged in order to control them.

### Power Struggles Holding Back Progress

Unfortunately, the current make-up of the TJPA has created a lot of log jams in the project roll-out.

San Francisco's three TJPA members; the Transportation Authority Director, Mayor Newsom's appointee, and the Board of Supervisors representative have been repeatedly unable to reach agreements on moving strong policy forward for a world class Transbay Terminal.

### Election Information

#### How To Find Out Where to Vote!

During every election, some voters find that their official election information has either not been delivered properly, or has been misplaced.

If you are unsure of where and/or how to vote, contact:

#### San Francisco Department Of Elections

**Phone:** (415) 554-4375    **TTY:** (415) 554-4386

**Web:** [http://www.sfgov.org/site/election\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/election_index.asp)

#### Smart Voter - San Francisco

On this League of Women Voters web site, you can find your polling place, and even go over an example ballot, by simply entering your registered address -

<http://www.smartvoter.org/ca/sf/>



### Measure Could Break The Log Jams

Prop C seeks to end the gridlock by making certain that all three of San Francisco's TJPA representatives are elected officials; The Mayor himself, The Supervisor from the district where the Terminal will be built, and one other Board Supervisor.

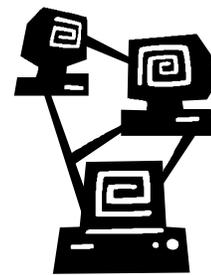
This will ensure that if the San Francisco contingent can't resolve differences and move forward, all three members can be held directly accountable by the voters in the next election.

### Mayor Newsom Plays A Reluctant Bride

Mayor Newsom has complained that the measure would be difficult for him to comply with because of a busy schedule, but with a project of such importance to future San Francisco and California energy and environmental policy, the Mayor needs to make time to be there. After all, the sooner he helps to get this essential project online the sooner he can shift full attention to his other tasks.

This Tuesday, help cut the bureaucratic red tape, and vote YES on Prop C for a strong, rapid rollout of the Transbay Terminal project.

# Core Report: The Corporate Take-Over Of The Internet - And How We Can Stop It



## Should multi-national corporations control our new communications network?

San Francisco has a historic chance to break the private monopoly grip of our internet, cable and phone providers and build a public internet communication system to compete with these corporate giants, bringing us lower rates and better service. Recently, Mayor Gavin Newsom announced a plan to bring free internet to all San Franciscans by 2007. This move was very important because multi-national wireless corporations such as Verizon (seeking to undermine internet phone competition) have already twisted the arms of 15 state governments to pass outrageous laws making it *illegal* for local communities to install their own public internet service! They are now courting California's legislature with the same cynical plans. In order to avoid this anti-consumer corporate manipulation, it is vital that we set up our own public internet and cable system immediately.

***But there has been a shocking development in the Mayor's plan.*** The agency that was placed in charge of the project, the Department of Telecommunications and Information Services (DTIS), has been publicly called to the carpet by both grassroots organizations and members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, for negotiating in secret to hand the City's new network to the monopoly control of private corporations instead of installing a system that would be owned by the public. During a December 2005 hearing, Supervisors serving on the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), repeatedly asked DTIS why it had engaged in this under the radar, pro-monopoly process. ***DTIS never gave a straight answer, and then just three months later, announced that a monopoly partnership between Google and Earthlink corporations will build, own, and control our community internet system!***

## Same Old Monopoly Story

Worse still, Google/Earthlink intends to install a cheap, slow, antenna only based network, instead of using city owned high capacity fiber optic lines to build a twenty-first century ready backbone that would provide up to 100 times better access speed.

Just as with the city's other monopoly utilities, the Google/Earthlink deal will give us sub-standard service, and with hidden costs. In fact, their plan is far from free and equal to all. It will provide two tiers of access - one for the poor who will get 'free' very slow speed internet, in return for their having to suffer through advertising, and even more alarming, at the cost of handing over of their personal information to Google Corporation. And the wealthy won't fare much better. Those who can afford it will pay \$20 a month for service that is only a little bit faster than the lower tier, and that will also potentially subject users to ads, and transfer their private information to the for-profit use of the monopoly.

## Activists And Supervisors Take Action

But San Franciscans aren't going to take this corporate give-away lying down. Our City has joined with a local coalition of progressive organizations and individuals who are working alongside Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi, Tom Ammiano, and Jake McGoldrick to demand accountability from DTIS, and to win a superior *publicly owned* broadband internet system for San Francisco.

## Federal Government Pushing For A Corporate Controlled Internet

This struggle is made particularly urgent by recent moves in the Bush Administration and the U.S. Congress to hand the internet over to the de facto control of private media corporations in much the same way that radio and television were handed to media conglomerates in the early twentieth century. Such private domination of media has already dealt a serious blow to democratic speech. Loss of internet freedom would be even more devastating. San Francisco can, and must, set the standard for the world, that the internet belongs to the people, not a handful of stockholders and CEOs out to make a fast buck. Be on the look-out for your chance to help!

## Our City - June 2006 Election Recommendations - Vote This Tuesday, June 6th!

### State Ballot Measures

**Prop 81 YES** Provides vital funding for repairing and expanding the California library system.

**Prop 82 YES** Establishes and funds a statewide preschool program.

### Local Ballot Measures

**Prop A YES** Allocates \$10 million each year, for three years, to city-wide violence prevention programs.

**Prop B YES** Protects both TIC Buyers and Tenants by making real estate speculators openly disclose building eviction histories.

**Prop C YES** Adds accountable elected officials to the Transbay Terminal Authority to help the transit hub move forward.

**Prop D (no recommendation)** Aims to separate the elderly/disabled from potentially violent patients at Laguna Honda hospital but does so with an unnecessary zoning loophole that may promote construction of nursing facilities in residential neighborhoods.

### Local Candidate Races

**District 12 - State Assembly** - Our City supports **Green Party candidate Barry Hermanson** in the D-12 Assembly primary.

**Superior Court Judge - Seat 8** - Our City supports progressive candidate **Eric Safire** for this judicial seat.

*(no recommendations for other candidate races)*



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**Our City - June 2006 Pre-Election Update**