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# Our City Update

Volume 3, Issue 1 Summer/Fall '07

## Victory! 50% Solar & Wind Power!

### San Francisco Board Of Supervisors Passes The Largest Municipal Renewable Energy Project In History

On Tuesday, June, 19, 2007 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed ground breaking legislation to build enough solar, wind and efficiency projects to power San Francisco on 50% clean, renewable electricity in the next decade. Called Community Choice, the project also ends our century long dependence on PG&E for electricity by enabling the City to bypass PG&E and make its own energy purchases.

Our City helped found the coalition that has fought for Community Choice, which also includes Local Power, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the San Francisco Green Party and many other groups. And from April of 2004, Our City has led the grassroots field operation that helped bring about the passage of this crucial legislation.

48 other California cities have been waiting to follow San Francisco's example on Community Choice, so the passage of this measure will help lead California, and eventually the world, into a clean, local, renewable energy powered future.

But there is more to be done. PG&E is currently engaged in a massive PR campaign designed to fool the public into opting out of Community Choice and sticking with PG&E's expensive polluting energy. When your chance comes, say 'YES' to Community Choice and a big 'NO' to PG&E!



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## November 2006 Election Victories

### Key San Francisco Ballot Measures Win

#### Vital Relocation Funds For Evicted Tenants

Proposition H succeeded, giving increased relocation funds to tenants suffering Ellis Act evictions.

#### Paid Sick Days For Workers

Thanks to the passage of Measure F, San Francisco workers are guaranteed paid sick days, and can afford to leave work to use the City's emerging universal health care system.

#### Voters Insist On Mayor's Question Time With Board

Voters overwhelmingly passed Measure I asking the Mayor to attend a monthly public dialog with the Board of Supervisors. Mayor Newsom shamefully disobeyed that vote and refused. So, the new **Measure E** has been placed on *this* November's ballot, to mandate by law that he attend. Vote YES on E!

### Mandatory Public Hearings For Proposed Chain Stores

In an expansion of the Chain Store Ordinance that Our City helped push to victory in 2004, voters approved Proposition G, which requires all proposed chain store openings to seek approval in full public hearings at the Planning Commission so that neighborhoods can say 'no' to chains.

### Dangerous State Ballot Measures Defeated

#### Pregnant Teens Protected

Voters defeated Prop 85 that would have forced doctors to tell parents before providing abortions to pregnant minors.

#### Environmental Protections Defended

Prop 90 was soundly defeated. It would have let corporations and developers make communities pay them to follow environmental and other laws.



# Progressive Candidates Win Big Election Gains

## Education Boards Go Progressive!

In the November 2006 elections, San Francisco's two core educational boards, for the Community College and the Unified School District, quite well known for their virtual paralysis on bringing improvements to our schools, both took a big turn for the better, gaining three of Our City's top picks for education.

Green John Rizzo turned tides winning a key Community College board seat, and together, Green Jane Kim, along with progressive Democrat Kim Shree-Maufas, usurped the status quo majority of the Unified School District's board; which in turn ensured the election of their fellow progressive Mark Sanchez to the presidency of that board.

## Progressive Supes Trounce Challenges And Recalls!

Last November, Downtown launched a massive glossy mailer attack trying to oust Supervisor Chris Daly from his Board seat where he has been a stalwart progressive champion. Volunteers turned out on foot in the *hundreds* to defend Chris, and Downtown was sent packing!

Also, this past Spring, petition drives were launched to recall Supervisors Jake McGoldrick and Aaron Peskin. The drives were sponsored by selfish business interests which didn't like a couple of the Supervisors' votes for better parks and transit. San Francisco voters easily saw through the cynical deceptions, and neither petition gained enough signatures to qualify.

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## Stopping A Polluting Power Plant

### The Public Utilities Commission Plans To Build A Polluting Plant In Our Most Polluted Neighborhood

Even though San Francisco is about to build a massive new solar and wind project (see front page), the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) still intends to let a private corporation install and run a polluting natural gas power plant inside the city! Worse, the SFPUC plans to site this plant in the already heavily polluted and economically marginalized Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood (see our Core Report on page 3) which is 40% African American, with high concentrations of other people of color and low income residents. This blatantly classist, racist, and environmentally disastrous power plant project must be halted immediately. Outrageously, the Bayview's Supervisor, Sophie Maxwell, is supporting the power plant. Call 415-554-7670 to demand that she change her position!

### PG&E Could Vastly Increase The Demand For Natural Gas If We Don't Take Action

PG&E is planning to join the Williams Company to bring in massive amounts of imported liquid natural gas for electrical generation through a huge pipeline from Oregon to Northern California. It plans to build 9 new polluting plants in which

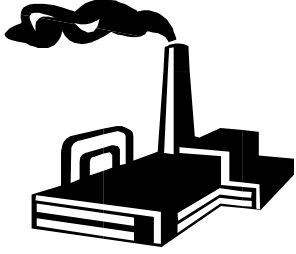


to burn this natural gas, and will charge all of its California customers for the cost of the plants, even those who don't use electricity from them!

### Williams Company's Cynical Role

Williams, PG&E's literal partner in crime, was sued for tens of millions of dollars in the early 2000s for its role in gaming the electricity system during California's energy crisis. In the most cynical of moves, Williams (a natural gas provider) managed to get California to accept four of its used polluting natural gas power turbines as a part of its settlement debt. So Williams managed to pay us for ripping us off, by giving us turbines with which to buy *more* of its natural gas! Three of those turbines are the very generators set to be erected as the new polluting power plant.

By stopping that proposed plant and instead fully funding and quickly building our new renewable energy projects, we can greatly decrease the demand for both PG&E and Williams Company's dirty imported natural gas, making it less profitable. And we will show both companies that San Franciscans will no longer reward them for using our electricity system as their personal gambling casino.



# Bayview Under Siege: The Toxic Corporate Attack On Our Most Vulnerable Neighborhood

## Centuries Of Purposeful Racism, Poisoning, And Neglect

It was once tacitly accepted that people of color and the poor would be treated far worse than their white and property owning counterparts. That police and judges would treat these groups badly and unfairly. That our worst factories and pollution would be placed in their neighborhoods because they lacked the financial power to resist. That they would be relegated to the worst of our jobs because they had no choice. That the races would live apart from each other and those who had darker skin would be politically disenfranchised, unable to vote or take part in democracy. But with the passage of civil rights laws and the forward thinking that came about in the 1960's, that time was supposed to have passed. The new millennium was supposed to have brought us a new equality unparalleled in history.

## The Dream Demolished

That promise was never fulfilled, and a new conservative backlash has even stripped away many progressive gains of the past. Whites and people of color have become even more polarized in modern society. Higher percentages of the poor and people of color than ever before, are now held in U.S. prisons for nonviolent crimes (and in record overall numbers). Affirmative action is being stolen from our schools by courts and administrators. Unwarranted police attacks, arrests, and racial profiling are again on the rise. The death penalty, especially for people of color, is back with a vengeance. The poor and people of color still receive the worst health care, and recently, for the first time in modern U.S. history, our child mortality rates have gone up. Our most toxic factories, waste sites, waste treatment facilities, and mold plagued substandard housing, are still relegated to marginalized communities just as they have always been. In most such neighborhoods, greed driven property owners and developers take advantage of low property values; snapping up and gentrifying these areas all over the country to make way for high priced condominium, stadium, and other puff projects while they sweep the poor and people of color outside of city walls in record numbers and at record speeds.

Ask San Franciscans if such tragedies continue in our own city, and most would say we are treating these groups much better than other U.S. cities. They would be completely wrong.

## The Toxic Environment Of San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point

The Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood on San Francisco's Southeast side, is made up almost entirely of residents who are low income and/or people of color. Its core is a former Navy yard, which contains so much military radioactive and toxic waste that large sections are federal superfund sites that are, to a vast extent, not yet cleaned up. Compounding this, the area is partly situated on natural serpentine rock (a source of asbestos) and when construction occurs there, it often stirs up huge amounts of one of the most cancer causing substances known to humankind. The City's central waste treatment facility, disproportionate stretches of smog spewing freeway, all of the polluting fossil fuel power plants, and many of the most polluting industries in San Francisco, have been placed (with more planned to be built) where their toxins flood this district, causing some of the highest rates of cancer and life threatening asthma in the country. Children in the area have died of asthma attacks triggered by the pollution. Only one of the pollution sources, the Hunters Point Power Plant, has been closed. The rest remain. And as noted on page 2 of this newsletter, our own San Francisco Public Utilities Commission is even planning to place *another* polluting natural gas power plant in the Bayview.

## Lennar Corporation, The Redevelopment Agency, And City Officials, Deepen The Damage

One might think, with this current toxic state of emergency in the Bayview Hunters Point, we would put a moratorium on construction and launch a massive program to completely clean up the neighborhood before letting developers build there; but nothing could be further from the truth. City officials, the Mayor, the infamous Redevelopment Agency, and even Bayview's own district Supervisor, Sophie Maxwell, have given permission to Miami based Lennar Corporation to build condos in the Bayview. (Lennar makes a habit of building on abandoned toxic military bases.) Ironically, many people of color fled to the Bayview after being driven from San Francisco's Fillmore District by Redevelopment Agency condominium projects that were almost identical to the ones now being allowed under Lennar. *(continued next page)*

Though it made previous commitments to build low income housing in its Bayview developments, Lennar has rapidly abandoned those promises. Lennar is now moving to build almost all market rate and high income housing, claiming that because of a weak national housing market, it can no longer afford to build the low income units that it promised us. But what Lennar has cleverly neglected to mention, is that San Francisco has not experienced a housing crash as other cities have. Property values remain high enough in San Francisco to easily make it profitable to include low income units in Lennar's housing projects. And this is not the first time Lennar has perpetrated a bait and switch on affordable housing. In Oakland and Orange County, Lennar promised that it would construct low income housing, only to go back on those promises once contracts were approved. Lennar has also been sued in Florida for the shoddy construction of homes which later collapsed during hurricane Andrew.

**Lennar Stirring Up Deadly Asbestos, With The Complicity Of The San Francisco Department Of Health**

The worst result of Lennar's activities in the Bayview has been the widespread release of deadly asbestos dust. Asbestos is one of the most toxic substances known, and inhaling just one micro-fiber of it can lead to cancer. As previously noted, the Bayview Hunters Point is partly situated on serpentine rock which is a natural source of asbestos. For the past several months, Lennar has been digging up the serpentine, and because it did not abide by proper safety procedures, dust and asbestos have been released in large amounts, exposing workers, residents and school children in the area to breathing in the dust and fibers. The San Francisco Department of Health has been complicit in this outrage by claiming in public hearings that there is no danger, and that exposure levels in the construction area are safe. However it is well established science that there is no safe level of asbestos exposure! To ensure that this public poisoning stops, it is vital that Lennar's activities be halted. Bayview activists and Supervisor Chris Daly are pursuing a moratorium on the Lennar construction projects. Be on the lookout for your chance to support this effort!

**End**



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