

The Case for a Resolution in Favor of Stronger Solar Goals

Why Solar?

Let's first begin by covering the main reasons for Los Angeles to be a strong pro-solar leader. Solar is a critical element of the clean energy future that we need to be moving toward, and is more achievable and affordable than ever before. Cities and organizations across the country are calling for bold transitions to renewable energy, and the City of San Diego recently committed to getting 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2035. Compared to fossil fuel electricity generation, solar is better for our **health**, our **environment**, and our **economy**.

Health

- The Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan area was ranked the most polluted city in the country for ozone pollution by the American Lung Association, and the fifth most polluted for particle pollution.
- Los Angeles County's levels of ozone: in 2015 there were 83 days when LA surpassed the Clean Air Act's ozone level limits.
- 875,000 Angelenos, including 205,000 children, live with asthma, and are thus at increased risk from our increased ozone and particle pollution.
- Solar electricity production does not release the toxic substances and particles that are an unavoidable byproduct of electricity production through fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas.

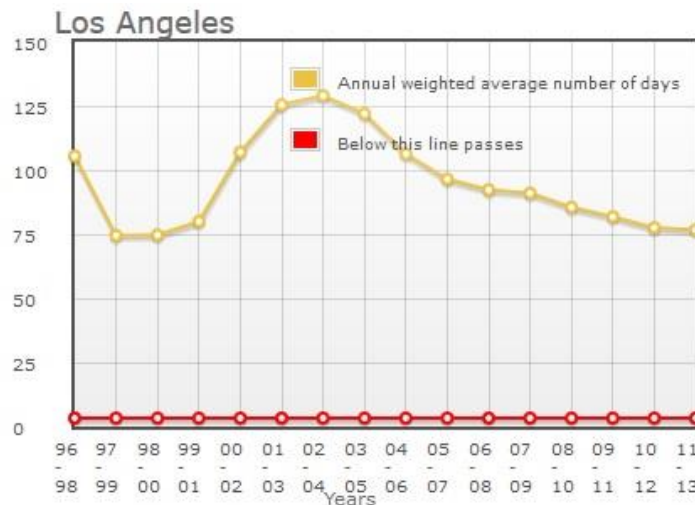


Fig. 1: *The number of high ozone days in Los Angeles County 1996-2013. (Source: American Lung Association State of the Air report 2015)*

Environment

Compared to coal-based electricity, PV electricity over its lifetime:

- uses 86 to 89 percent less water,
- occupies or transforms over 80 percent less land,
- presents approximately 95 percent lower toxicity to humans,
- contributes 92 to 97 percent less to acid rain,
- contributes 96 percent to 98 percent less greenhouse gases.

Economy

- California added 20,000 new solar industry jobs in 2015.
- Average payback time of a residential solar system: 6-9 years.
- Average system lifespan: 25 years.
- Overtime, solar PV systems generate more money than they cost.
- Local solar project owners add more benefit to the community and electricity grid than they receive in benefits from solar incentive programs.

Why Los Angeles?

The City of Los Angeles is already a national leader on solar energy, but it has the potential to do much more. In order to continue to be the top solar city in the country, Los Angeles has to eschew the lower tiers of its targets and hold itself to a high standard. Our city enjoys over 250 days of sunshine per year, and boasts over 10,000 acres of rooftop solar potential. As a global cultural hub and one of the largest cities confronting the realities of a changing climate in drought and record temperatures, we have a responsibility to lead on clean energy.

Some Questions and Arguments

You might hear a one of these arguments or questions if you bring this resolution before your council. Here is a quick resource for responding to them. If you have or hear additional questions not covered here, please contact Environment California's Solar Campaign Organizer Garrick Monaghan at garrick@environmentcalifornia.org or at 916-622-3621 so he can include them here.

“Isn't solar expensive for the city?”

The simple answer is that solar is very cost-effective. As mentioned in the “Economy” subsection above, solar projects actually deliver greater benefits to their community and the electricity grid than the incentive programs that support solar. And unlike with fossil fuel development, solar growth is proven to benefit local jobs. Solar is a good deal for everyone involved. For more detail on the benefits of local solar power, please consult Environment California Research & Policy Center's report *Shining Rewards*, which is also included with these documents or can be found on [Environment California Research & Policy Center](http://EnvironmentCaliforniaResearch.com)'s website.

“This doesn't seem like an issue that's specific to our neighborhood. Why should we pass this?”

Yes, this motion is about taking citywide action on a global issue. It's not just about one neighborhood. Not every neighborhood in LA lives in the shadow of an oil refinery or gas storage facility. But clean air and water are important to people in every corner of Los Angeles. As stakeholders in our communities, our local perspectives allow us to enrich the citywide conversation in support of solar power, and only through united action can the neighborhoods of Los Angeles drive political change on critical issues like this one that affect us all.