



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM ANNOUNCES COMMERCIAL
SOLAR CHALLENGE**

Businesses will receive free solar power assessments and energy efficiency audits to identify how to save energy and money

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Today Mayor Newsom challenged San Francisco businesses to go solar by this time next year, and join him as members of the Mayor's Solar Founders' Circle. Members of the Solar Founders' Circle will receive free solar assessments and energy efficiency audits from the San Francisco Department of the Environment. Over the course of the next few weeks, the Mayor's Office will invite San Francisco's largest 1,500 businesses to join the Solar Founders' Circle. Those 1,500 businesses have the potential to install 170 megawatts of solar on their roofs—more than thirty times the amount of solar currently installed in San Francisco, and enough to power 42,000 local households.

“San Francisco has a unique opportunity to lead the nation, and our City and businesses are up to the challenge. We have already launched an aggressive 10-year incentive program to lower the costs of solar for everyone,” said Mayor Gavin Newsom. “Now we're offering businesses free solar assessments and energy efficiency audits to lower the barriers even further. I'm asking our business leaders to ramp up our efforts to build the City's renewable energy portfolio and slash our carbon footprint.”

Independent experts will visit businesses to assess their building and roof, as well as their energy bills, to help identify how to save energy and money. Solar audits will help businesses confirm their solar potential and estimate how much a solar installation will cost, what incentives are available, and how installing solar would affect their electricity and water-heating bills, and financials. Energy efficiency audits will help businesses identify ways to reduce their energy costs and access energy efficiency rebates.

The program is funded in part by a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar America Cities initiative, as well as SF Environment's existing SF Energy Watch Program.

“Solar America City partnerships are helping our nation address two of the most pressing challenges we face: improving our energy security and combating global climate change,” said John Lushetsky, the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Program Manager, who was on hand to acknowledge the city's solar progress.

Mayor Newsom's challenge sets a goal for businesses to install five megawatts of solar electricity by September 2009 – a target that would double San Francisco's current solar generation. All businesses that install solar in the next year will be invited to join the Solar Founders' Circle.

Interested businesses may call the SF Environment Department at 415-355-3780 to schedule their free audits.

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