



January 2011

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[Our Home, Our City, Our Planet - SF Gate Blog](#)

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→ Green Cleaning Tip o' the Month

A mixture of hot water, baking soda, a few drops of liquid soap, and a capful or two of hydrogen peroxide works well as a bathroom sink, tub, and tile cleaner. Why pay money for toxic products when you can use safe and effective alternatives found in your kitchen? For more green cleaning ideas, check out our [factsheet](#).



→ Win a \$45 Carpool Parking Voucher

Yes, it is possible to save money, reduce stress, and protect the environment all on your way to work. And through February, you're also eligible to win \$45 in free carpool parking just for registering for our [Rideshare Matching](#) service (aka carpool!) The service will connect you to people who work and live near you -- and don't worry, you can meet beforehand to discuss who'll drive and work out a convenient arrangement that works with your schedule, from one day a week to the whole enchilada. [Signing up](#) is free and easy. Go ahead, find the commute you've always dreamed of and get that \$45 voucher before they're gone.



Use the [EcoFinder](#) to find out where to recycle just about everything!

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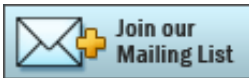
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We Want Your Dead Batteries



And we've made it easy for you to recycle them. If you push your carts out to the curb each week, you can put your batteries in a clear plastic baggie and set it on top of your black cart on collection day for recycling (please tape lithium batteries first). Larger apartment buildings can get an orange battery recycling bucket from [Recology](#) at no additional charge. And if that's not enough, we have over a hundred drop-off sites throughout the city: check the [EcoFinder](#) for retailers in your neighborhood.

We're serious about this battery thing.



Local Businesses Go Green

Fifty San Francisco environmental leaders received honors last Wednesday at the 5th Annual Green Business Awards Reception. Congratulations to all of our recognized Green Businesses! To keep abreast of local organizations that have met the rigorous requirements of the [Green Business program](#), be sure to "like" our new [SF Green Business Facebook Page](#).



Energy Savings Coming Your Way

Be on the lookout for SF Environment representatives, who will be visiting the neighborhoods of Cathedral Hill, Cow Hollow, Golden Gate Valley, Jordan Park, the Marina, Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Russian Hill, and part of the Richmond next month to help businesses cut energy costs through the [San Francisco Energy Watch](#) Program. To schedule a free assessment for your building and learn how you can save energy and money, call the [SF Energy Watch](#) hotline at (415) 355-3769. SF Energy Watch is a partnership between PG&E and the City of San Francisco.



Retire that Ancient Water Heater



Many multifamily properties in San Francisco have original boilers as old as the buildings themselves, dating from the 1930s. (In other words, they're inefficient and unreliable.) With our new [Boiler Incentive Program](#), property owners

and managers can get rid of those relics and save up to 40% off the cost of a new energy and money-saving water heating system. For details and to apply, visit our [boiler incentive program](#) page.

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February 2011

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→ SF School Compost Art Contest Winners

Five young students were named winners of a poster contest recently held at five San Francisco public schools. The contest asked students to create colorful artwork that featured composting with the green bin.



Each participating school had a winner, and the artwork was featured on trilingual posters that students were given to take home. The participating schools were: El Dorado, [E.R. Taylor](#), Guadalupe, Monroe, and Visitacion Valley Elementary Schools. Posters were also distributed for display in local storefronts in the Portola and Excelsior Districts where these schools are located.

→ Energy Efficiency Saves Energy, Creates Jobs

On Feb 18, Mayor Ed Lee signed [ground-breaking legislation](#) to improve energy efficiency in existing buildings, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower energy costs, and create green jobs. The ordinance requires owners of existing non-residential buildings over 10,000 square feet to track how much energy each building consumes using free online tools, and to obtain an energy audit every five years.



"Millions of dollars go wasted every year because buildings aren't as energy-efficient as they could be," said Steven Ring of Cushman and Wakefield, a co-chair of the [task force](#) that recommended the policy. "By eliminating energy waste, property owners can enjoy the benefits of that cash and at the same time create good jobs for energy management professionals and the construction industry."

Buildings, which account for about 70 percent of the electricity consumed in the U.S., could be made up to 50 percent more energy efficient with currently available products and services. "Up to 70% of businesses that get an audit from the [SF Energy Watch](#) program take

action." said SF Environment Director Melanie Nutter. "We are ready to help the commercial sector as the energy efficiency of our community is dramatically improved."

→ Mei Ling's Secret Garden

If you plant a tree and no one's watching, will it grow? Mei Ling Hui, the [Urban Forest](#) Coordinator at SFEnvironment, is counting on it. Recently Hui and a small group of volunteers and urban agriculture advocates planted the first of what she hopes will be a number of urban fruit orchards around the city.



Hui selected a cluster of bareroot apple, pear, fig, and lemon trees and, after a morning of strenuous digging on a grassy hill, the group put the young trees in wire cages to protect them from gophers and placed them gently in the sandy earth. The kick-off planting took place in a so-far-undisclosed corner of Golden Gate Park, but the majority of the others are planned for low income, "food insecure" areas. The event wasn't exactly a secret, but Hui is waiting to announce the orchard's location until the trees have taken root and established themselves.

→ Living Roofs Now

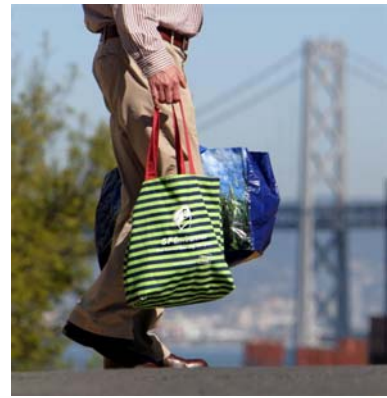
The SF Environment's green jobs training program, Environment Now, has been working to help maintain the City of San Francisco's first municipal building living roof (aka [green roof](#)) at One South Van Ness.



The 10,000 square foot living roof provides a number of ecosystem benefits such as energy savings, reduction of "[urban heat island effect](#)," on-site stormwater capture and filtration, native habitat for local wildlife and finally, the living roof helps blend the building into our natural landscape.

→ Tell Us What You Think & Win A SF Environment Canvas Bag!

You hear from us once a month about all kinds of topics, and we want to hear back from you! What do you think of our newsletter? Too long? Too short? Just right? Fill out our [newsletter survey](#) and we'll enter you in a drawing to win a brand new made-in-San Francisco shopping bag constructed from scrap cloth. We're giving away five bags, so [tell us what you think today](#) to snag one!



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→ Clean, Green, Driving Machines & Beyond A Green Transportation Workshop

Transportation accounts for about 40 percent of the Bay Area's carbon footprint--and more than 50 percent of San Francisco's. At this workshop, sponsored by the Business Council on Climate Change and the SF Clean Cities Coalition, you



will learn how to not only reduce your businesses transportation demands, but also how to develop the best ["alternative commuting"](#) options for your employees. Join us on Wednesday, April 6 to learn how your business can create a green transportation program!

[Register here.](#)

When: Wed Apr 6 10:00am-2:30pm

Where: Port Commission Hearing Room, Ferry Building [map](#)

→ Panel to meet again for SF's Climate Action Plan

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SF Environment, in conjunction with [BC3](#), hosted the first meeting of the Business Advisory Panel



BUSINESS COUNCIL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

for the SF Climate Action Plan (CAP). The Advisory Panel, composed of representatives from a wide range of local businesses, gathered at Google's San Francisco office to learn about the revision of the [2004 CAP](#) and the actions the city has taken to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals. The panel will meet for a second time on March 28 to provide business feedback on specific actions proposed under the new CAP. Click [here](#) for more information.

→ Bug Day at the Randall Museum

Saturday, April 30, 2011, 10 AM - 2 PM -
SAVE THE DATE!

The bugs will be back and better than ever at [Randall Museum's](#) annual celebration of all things buggy.

Enjoy creepy-crawly crafts, live entertainment, real creatures (and their scientists), and more!
Free Admission! \$3 Donation Encouraged.



→ Spring into the Green Festival

A project of [Green America](#) and [Global Exchange](#), two leading nonprofit organizations dedicated to environmental and social justice for more than 27 years, Green Festival inspires and promotes the connection between change and sustainable progress for people, communities and businesses.

Celebrate Green Festival's 10th Anniversary at the Spring San Francisco Green Festival, April 9th-10th at the SF Concourse Exhibition Center! Click [here](#) for more info.



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Becoming the Most Sustainable City Anywhere



In San Francisco, April is Earth Month! Check out pictures of our [Open House and Art Opening](#). It was an incredible mix of people and communities and we hope you'll come to the next one!

Our [Community InSight Project](#) launches this week and it's all about YOU: we're asking you to [tell us your thoughts](#) about how we can help you make your home, neighborhood, and this great city even better. And

Saturday at Civic Center Plaza, we're co-hosting San Francisco's largest Earth Day event in a decade: [Earth Day SF](#). [Sign up to volunteer with us at Earth Day SF](#). I look forward to seeing you!




Drop Off Your Unwanted Medicines

Don't throw expired medicines in the trash or flush them down the drain!

Help us prevent pollution of our bay. Gather up your expired or unwanted medicines and bring them to any [SF Police Station](#) on **Saturday, April 30, 10am-2pm**. It's easy and free and one day only, so take advantage of this great opportunity.

Learn more about [safe medicine disposal](#) and how you can do your part to keep our bay and oceans pharmaceutical-free.




San Francisco Wins Green Leadership Award

On April 19, San Francisco received a Green California Leadership Award for having "pioneered a green purchasing program that is



being emulated by many other cities and communities." Together with the [Office of Contract Administration](#), we've created the SF Approved List which includes more than 1,000 green products that [our City staff are required to buy](#). You can use our list to [green your home, small business](#) or [large organization](#).

Here are a few products on the SF Approved List you might want to try:

- [Rechargeable batteries](#) that last a year between charges.
- [Less-toxic permanent markers](#) and [whiteboard markers](#).
- [Cool keyboard dusters](#) that don't have greenhouse gasses.
- [Microfiber cloths](#) that clean faster and require less chemicals.



→ Greener Than Thou? Point the Finger!

This Earth Day, we thought we'd help you tell on others that aren't doing quite as good a job as you are. Don't worry, they won't get in trouble, we'll just give them the information they need to do the right thing.

- Landlord not providing blue and green bins? Use our [anonymous report form](#) and we'll talk to them.
- See a smoking car? Call 1-800-EXHAUST (394-2878).
- Want to join the citizen-led movement to clean up the whole world (and report dumping and blight here in San Francisco)? Sign up to attend the next [Let's Do It SF](#) Training.

→ You Like Us, You Really Like Us



A bunch of you responded to our newsletter survey, thank you! And the news about the newsletter is good: you like the frequency, the content, and the length. Some of you even look forward to seeing it in your inbox! You mentioned wanting to know more about events, so to keep you better informed and involved, we've added a new link to our [Events page](#) as a regular feature of the weekly newsletter. Please stay in touch! We love hearing from you!

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→ Got Ideas? We're Listening!



Have a great idea for a more sustainable SF? Wish you had a place for the City to hear what you have to say? We want to hear from you! Check out our discussion forum, ideas4SF.org. Share your ideas, vote and comment on other people's ideas, and get feedback from your government. We're listening!

Thanks for staying in touch!
Melanie Nutter, Director



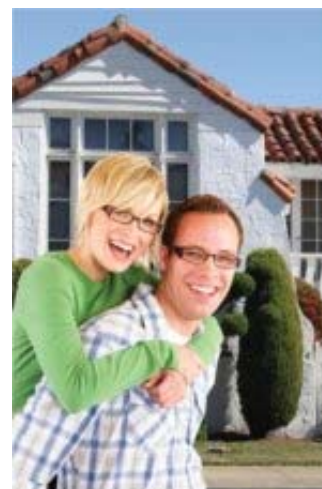
We want to hear your ideas. Use InSight to: submit, vote, and explore ideas that make SF better.

→ Get Comfortable with Energy Savings

Homeowners around San Francisco are taking advantage of our [Home Improvement & Performance program](#). You can receive up to \$7,000 for home improvement projects that have saved an average of 41% of energy usage and can make your home healthier, quieter, and more comfortable.

One Twin Peaks resident received \$6,000 from the program, only had to pay his participating contractor \$1,200, and slashed his energy bill by using 40% less energy every month.

Visit SFEnvironment.org/sfhip and call a participating contractor who will help you every step of the way; they'll even submit your paperwork for the rebate!



Use the [EcoFinder](#) to find out where to recycle just about everything!

→ Yellowpages Only Where They're Wanted

San Francisco is on its way to becoming the first city in the nation to limit distribution of [unsolicited Yellow Pages](#). The Board of Supervisors conducted a 10-1 first vote on Tuesday May 10, and gave final approval today.

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There are 1.6 million copies of the Yellow Pages, produced by various companies, distributed in San Francisco every year - nearly two for every SF resident.



The measure, to go into effect on May 1, 2012, calls for a three-year pilot in which the commercial directories will not be dropped at doorsteps of residences and businesses unless requested. Anyone who wants a phone directory simply has to request one.

→ San Francisco's Newest Green Library

The new soon-to-be-[LEED Gold Certified Merced branch](#) of the San Francisco Public Library re-opened this past Saturday.

Cork floors and certified sustainably harvested wood throughout, refinished 1950's reading chairs, expanded bike parking, and beautiful energy efficient lighting are a few of the green design elements visitors will notice, along with the native drought-tolerant landscaping designed to keep stormwater out of the sewer system and on-site for irrigation. Less apparent are the water-efficient fixtures, locally-sourced construction materials, and the fact that 75% of construction waste was kept out of the landfill.



Ride your bike and park in their spacious racks, or take [MUNI lines 17, 18, 28, 28L, 29 or M Ocean View](#) to checkout your favorite book.

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Use the [EcoFinder](#) to find out where to recycle just about everything!

→ InSight of the Month: Regional Collaboration

This month's top InSight Idea asks SF Environment to "create more opportunities for regional environmental initiatives by collaborating with other cities." We love it! And, it turns out, we already do a lot of regional collaboration.



If you want to learn more about how we work with other local government agencies, [check out this idea on ideas4sf.org](#). And while you're there, share your own ideas about how to make San Francisco greener, cleaner, and healthier!

→ Energy Savings Coming to the Richmond District!

Be on the lookout for SF Environment representatives, who will be visiting the Richmond District starting this month to help businesses cut energy costs through the SF Energy Watch program. Thousands of businesses have already reduced costs through this program. To read about different energy efficiency projects implemented by various local businesses and organizations visit www.sfenergywatch.org.



To schedule a free assessment and learn how you can save energy and money, call the SF Energy Watch hotline at (415) 355-3769. SF Energy Watch is a partnership between PG&E and the City of San Francisco.

→ Join Us For Our Third Thursday Movie Night: *Unnatural Causes*

[Unnatural Causes](#) is the acclaimed documentary series broadcast by PBS that crisscrosses the nation uncovering startling new findings that suggest there is much more to our health than bad habits, health care, or unlucky genes. The social circumstances in which we are

born, live, and work can actually get under our skin and disrupt our physiology as much as germs and viruses. [Click here to watch the trailer.](#)

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Afterwards, we'll hear from local organizations and agencies that are addressing issues of health inequities, including:

- Megan Wall, SF Department of Public Health
- Alicia Harris, Breast Cancer Action
- Sraddha Mehta, SF Department of the Environment
- Tracey Patterson, Southeast Food Access Working Group

This event is FREE and open to the public at our [EcoCenter at 11 Grove St.](#) Light refreshments will be provided. Please join us!

→ Want To Green Your Home But Don't Know Where To Start?

We have your answer! SF Environment has partnered with non-profit community groups to administer FREE green Home Assessments. Each free assessment is a 60-90 minute home visit from a trained professional who provides information promoting energy efficiency, zero waste training, water conservation, safety and disaster preparedness.



Photograph by Paul Liotsakis

Contact one of the follow community groups to schedule a free Green Home Assessment:

- **ASIAN, Inc.** - 415-928-5910
- **Rebuilding Together SF** - 415-905-1611
- **SF APRI** - 415-821-4777
- **SF Community Power** - 415-626-8723
- **SF Living Wage Coalition** - 415-863-1225

→ CityCamp SF 2011: Ideas & Action

CityCampSF is an informal conference for municipal employees, journalists, developers and neighborhood leaders working on solutions for better communities and government. SF Environment will be joining the [Department of Technology](#) and many

others for discussions and work sessions around sustainability, health, digital engagement and much more. It will be a great day of



inspiring conversations and actions, so bring your best ideas!

You can [register through Eventbrite here](#).

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→ SF Named "Greenest City" in North America

San Francisco grabbed the mantle of greenest major city in the [U.S. and Canada Green City Index](#), with New York, Seattle, Denver and Boston rounding out the top five U.S. cities.

The unique study conducted by the [Economist Intelligence Unit \(EIU\)](#) and commissioned by Siemens assesses and compares 27 major U.S. and Canadian cities on environmental performance and policies across nine categories - CO2 emissions, energy, land use, buildings, transport, water, waste, air quality and environmental governance. San Francisco received a perfect score of 100 for our zero waste program!



Check out a [video](#) of Director Melanie Nutter of the Department of the Environment talking about why San Francisco is the greenest city in North America!

→ Solar Group-Purchasing Program for SF Area Businesses Launches

The Department of the Environment is supporting an exciting new commercial solar group-purchasing program called [Solar@Work](#).

This innovative model was developed in partnership with the [World Resources Institute](#) to help bring down the price of solar for small-to medium-sized businesses and commercial properties that are unable to achieve economies of scale enjoyed by larger systems. Solar@Work strives to recruit twenty or more interested participants to buy more than 2 Megawatts of solar power over the next 6 months. Achieving this goal would help double the amount of commercial solar in SF. Program participants will be able to go solar with little to no upfront costs through the program's market-leading



solar lease option. For more information, visit the [Solar@Work website](#).

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→ SF Hosted Green Economic Forum

On May 25th, the Department of the Environment and the [Office of Economic and](#)



[Workforce Development](#) convened San Francisco's Green Economic Forum: Jobs and Opportunity in a Changing Climate. The event brought together businesses, community-based organizations and government agencies to discuss the green jobs landscape in San Francisco and begin to forge the path toward a more economically viable, socially just and sustainable city. According to the [Brookings Institution](#), San Francisco ranks sixth out of the top 100 metropolitan areas in its number of green jobs, with more than 51,000.

Mayor Lee spoke at the Green Economic Forum about San Francisco's climate action plan and accepted recommendations from five community advisory panels. He noted that the economic recession presents an opportunity to green the city's infrastructure.

To see [photos](#) and [videos](#) from the event, and to read the Community Advisory Panels' recommendations to Mayor Lee, visit the [Business Council on Climate Change](#).

→ Summer of Smart Teams Up with the Department of the Environment for the Second Urban Innovation Weekend, July 22-24, 2011

San Francisco boasts many of the world's most accomplished technologists and community activists. Mash them up with a high profile Mayoral race and you have [Summer of Smart](#), a four-month experiment in urban innovation and open government.



Over three weekends -- multidisciplinary 48 hour "hackathons for everyone" -- developers, designers, community leaders, urban planners, journalists, artists, environmentalists, and other creative minds will rapidly prototype solutions to some of the city's most recognized needs. The best of the applications and ideas will be

presented to the candidates and city officials in September. To watch a video about the Summer of Smart project, [click here!](#)

The Department of the Environment is proud to partner with Summer of Smart on the second Urban Innovation Weekend, being held July 22-24 at [Gray Area Foundation for the Arts](#), where multidisciplinary teams will be formed to prototype innovative applications, ideas, policy solutions, and more around Sustainability, Transportation, and Energy. [Register](#) now for the free event!

For more background on Summer of Smart's progress so far, [click here](#).

FREE Light Bulb Finder App for Smartphones

A new smartphone application, [Light Bulb Finder](#), makes it easy to switch to energy-efficient lighting and save on utility bills. The app is available for free download on iPhone, iPad, iPod touch and Android devices.

Walking throughout your home, input basic information about your current fixtures and incandescent light bulbs. The app instantly provides recommendations for energy-saving equivalents - from spots to dimmables - with the right light quality, fit and performance. Save a shopping list on your phone, and purchase bulbs at local SF stores or directly through the app. Take a [video tour!](#)



You can use the app to see financial payback information on individual bulb replacements or calculate the savings potential of your entire home.

You can check out or download the free app at the [Light Bulb Finder website](#).

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→ Mayor Lee Announces Partnership with Chrysler Group LLC, U.S. Department of Energy & SF Department of Environment to Test 14 New Plug-in Hybrid Pickup Trucks

On August 2nd, Mayor Edwin M. Lee announced a partnership with [Chrysler Group LLC](#), [U.S. Department of Energy](#) (DOE) and San Francisco's [Department of the Environment](#) to test a fleet of 14 Ram 1500 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) pickup trucks as



part of a three year demonstration project. Real world city miles accumulated on the demonstration vehicles will be used to evaluate city drive cycles, charging performance, fuel economy and real-world performance.

"America's future lies beyond oil, and in San Francisco we are taking the steps necessary to start securing our green future today," said Mayor Lee. "We are excited to work with Chrysler to put these fourteen Ram plug-in hybrid electric pickup trucks to the test. By working with the car industry and the Department of Energy, we can test technology that may break our dependence on oil, reduce our presence in the Middle East, create jobs, and eliminate a major portion of our greenhouse gas emissions."

To learn more about the SF Department of Environment's work in Cleaner Fuels & Vehicles, visit our [Electric Vehicles in San Francisco page](#).

→ The InSight Team Rocks Out at Outside Lands!

From August 12th-14th, people from all over the Bay Area and beyond converged in Golden Gate Park for fun, food and a stellar line-up of musical acts. The massively successful music festival, [Outside Lands](#),

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returned in full force this year and presented itself as a perfect opportunity to engage with San Franciscans about the Department of Environment's Community InSight Campaign. The InSight Team hit the ground running for three days, gathering peoples' ideas on how to make San Francisco a greener, more sustainable place to live.

For each day of the festival, staff and volunteers from the Department of Environment employed a number of

interactive outreach techniques, including iPad surveys, video interviews and photos of fans holding an InSight thought bubble with their ideas4SF scrawled across. With over 400 responses, the survey was an overwhelming success and served to invigorate SF residents and InSight Team members alike in the exciting two-way dialogue that ensued surrounding the idea of making San Francisco the greenest city in the world!

To learn more about the SF Community InSight Project and to share YOUR ideas about how to make San Francisco a greener, healthier place to live, visit www.ideas4SF.org.



Caitlin's idea4SF: "Create a Commuter Bike Share Program." To see more photos of ideas4SF from Outside Lands 2011, click on the image above.

→ Join the 2011 Great Race for Clean Air!

Sign up today for the 2011 Great Race for Clean Air! Your business and employees will receive posters, prizes, awards and more for pledging to commute to work by walking, biking, transit, carpooling and vanpooling.

This friendly competition between Bay Area employers is sponsored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The Great Race runs from September 1st-October 31st. Get started today at www.SpareTheAir.org.



For more information on commute alternatives and programs, visit www.sfenvironment.org/DrivingAlternatives.

→ Get Comfortable with Energy Savings

The San Francisco Home Improvement & Performance program is now offering up to \$9,000 for home energy improvements.

Take advantage of these extra high incentives now - money is available on a first come, first served basis, or until June 2012. SF homeowners have taken advantage of this program to save, on average, over 30% of their modeled energy use!



Find out more about this program at www.sfenvironment.org/sfhip or call 415-355-3769.

→ Energy Savings Coming to District 4 and 7

Be on the lookout for Department of Environment representatives, who will be visiting the Sunset District as well as the West Portal and Ocean Avenue commercial corridors in District 7 starting next month to help businesses cut energy costs through the SF Energy Watch program.



Thousands of businesses have already reduced costs through this program. To read about different energy efficiency projects implemented by various local businesses and organizations visit www.sfenergywatch.org.

To schedule a free assessment and learn how you can save energy and money, call the SF Energy Watch hotline at (415) 355-3769. SF Energy Watch is a partnership between PG&E and the City of San Francisco.

→ Take Your First Step Toward Becoming a Recognized Green Business in the City & County of San Francisco!

The SF Department of Environment's Green Business Program will be hosting a workshop in our building at 11 Grove Street on Thursday, September 15th from 11:30am-12:30pm to help you learn more about the SF Green Business Program's standards as well as its recognition process.

If your business is considering enrollment, actively working on the checklist, receiving audits, or just curious on how to be more green, [this workshop is for you!](#)

We will show you what to expect during the on-site assessments including how to be prepared and common issues you may encounter. We will discuss documentation and assist you in being recognized as a green business as soon as possible. The workshop will be followed by a Q & A session, so bring any questions you may have about our program or specific questions for your business.



**SAN FRANCISCO
GREEN
BUSINESS**

We look forward to seeing you there! [Visit our event page](#) for more information. And for further information on our Green Business program, visit www.sfgreenbusiness.org.

→ Living Roof at One South Van Ness Avenue

1st year the plants sleep, 2nd year they creep, 3rd year they leap! As part of a comprehensive renovation at One South Van Ness Avenue, the City and County of San Francisco's Real Estate Division and the Department of Public Works planned and constructed a 10,000 square foot living roof.



The living roof at One South Van Ness Avenue is well into its first year of growth and seems to be ahead of schedule! We're mitigating storm water runoff, harvesting rainwater for irrigation and creating wildlife habitat 8 floors above Market and Van Ness. Check out the evidence above!

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Clean Transportation, Bug Day, SF Climate Action Plan!

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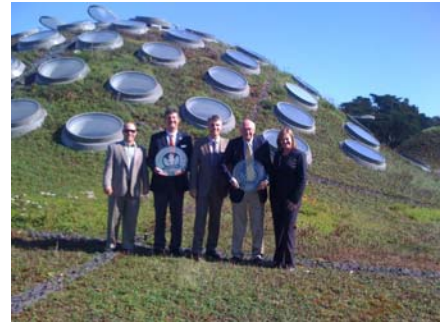


Use the [EcoFinder](#) to find out where to recycle just about everything!

→ The California Academy of Sciences Receives Second LEED Platinum Rating from U.S. Green Building Council

On September 27, 2008, [the California Academy of Sciences](#) unveiled the world's greenest museum. Three years and more than five million visitors later, the museum celebrates another symbolic color: platinum.

The U.S. Green Building Council presented the Academy with its [second LEED Platinum award](#), making the California Academy of Sciences the world's first "Double Platinum" museum and [the world's largest Double Platinum building](#). The Department of the Environment and Director Nutter congratulate the California Academy of Sciences for all of their hard work in earning this commendation as well as their commitment to operate one of the greenest, most sustainable museums in the world. To learn more about the Department of the Environment's Green Building Program, [click here](#).



[The Department of the Environment](#) encourages all San Francisco residents to [visit the museum](#) and take advantage of the California Academy of Sciences Neighborhood [free days](#) during the month of October to celebrate the museum's latest achievement and learn more about the Department of the Environment's [San Francisco Home Improvement & Performance program](#). Please bring your San Francisco Home Improvement & Performance (SFHIP) door hangers to the Department of the Environment's table either of the weekends we will be there; October 14th, 15th & 16th; and October 28th, 29th & 30th to enter to win a free annual membership and [learn more about SFHIP!](#)

Please note that in order to take advantage of the Neighborhood [free days](#) at the museum, you must show a valid photo ID with proof of residency. For more information about free days, [visit the California Academy of Sciences free day page](#).

→ Have Ideas for San Francisco? Post Them

Today on Ideas4SF.org!

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Join hundreds of San Franciscans and take part in the Department of the Environment's Community InSight Campaign by sharing your ideas of how to make San Francisco a greener and healthier place to live!



Idea4SF: "More funding for energy efficient lighting."

The SF Community InSight team will be taking submissions through the end of 2011. Submit your ideas today and be heard by your city government in 2012!

Our SF Community InSight team has engaged with SF residents from all over the city about the Department of the Environment's programs and SF residents' ideas of how we can make San Francisco the greenest city in the world!

We want to hear YOUR ideas! Help us become the greenest city in the world! To learn more about the SF Community InSight Project and to share your ideas about how to make San Francisco a greener, healthier place to live, visit www.ideas4SF.org.

→ The Environmental Justice Program Supports 100 Solar Systems in the Bayview and Potrero Hill Neighborhoods

On Saturday, September 10, 2011, one of the Department of the Environment's Environmental Justice grant recipients, GRID Alternatives, organized teams of sponsors and volunteers for a "Solarthon" in the Bayview, and installed 13 PV solar systems in one day for families living on low-incomes! Each system will provide over 75% of the families' electricity needs for the next 30 years, protecting them from rising and unpredictable energy prices.



When we add these 13 new systems to the number of solar installations previously funded by the Department's EJ Program, we are proud to announce that EJ grant funds have now supported the installation of 100 solar systems on low-income homes and non-profit buildings in the Southeast area of the City! Our EJ funds have helped to install solar at the Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Services Center, the Bayview YMCA, the Bayview Commons, the All Hallows Senior Center, the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House and the San Francisco Food Bank.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Department of the Environment's grant recipient, GRID Alternatives.

→ The Department of the Environment Invites You to Attend Our Fall Open House and Art Reception!

Join us in the [Department of the Environment's](#) EcoCenter at 11 Grove Street on Friday, October 21, 2011 for our fall open house and the opening reception of Ann Savageau's "[Bags Across the Globe: Designing to Reduce Waste](#)".

Artist and designer, [Ann Savageau](#), is a Professor of the University of California Davis' Design Program and her creation tells the story of a three year global project. Savageau sent over 200 beautiful cloth and vinyl shopping bags recycled from waste as free gifts to more than 100 friends in 62 countries on every continent. BAG recipients use one bag and give the second bag to a friend. Most of the initial recipients have sent photos, messages and even plastic shopping bags from their countries to be displayed in this installation. The display of more than 1,000 plastic shopping bags represents the estimated average number of plastic bags used by a California couple in just one year.



Bags Across the Globe

As you check out "Bags Across the Globe: Designing to Reduce Waste", you'll also have the opportunity to [learn more about our Department's programs](#) that coincide with the artist's vision for reducing waste.

Event Details:

Opening Reception: Friday, October 21, 2011 from 5-7:30PM.

Installation Open: Tuesday, October 4, 2011 - Thursday, January 5, 2011, Mondays - Fridays, 9AM - 5PM.

To learn more about this and other Department of the Environment events, [visit our events calendar](#).

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→ GreenFinanceSF for Commercial Property Owners Launches

As part of San Francisco's effort to drive environmental and economic innovation, Mayor Ed Lee and Director Melanie Nutter launched a groundbreaking program to encourage businesses to undertake climate-friendly building improvements and attract significant new capital to pay for them.



The GreenFinanceSF Commercial program is a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program designed to give commercial property owners a new form of financing for the installation of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation improvements.

San Francisco's 16,000+ commercial buildings account for half of citywide energy use and 27% of the city's carbon footprint. The program strives to help commercial property owners reduce operating costs, improve occupant health and comfort, enhance building value, and mitigate environmental impact as well as to provide financial institutions with very secure collateral to facilitate project financing at attractive rates.

"The commercial PACE program is the next big step forward in San Francisco's efforts to dramatically reduce energy use and carbon emissions," declared San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee. "We are excited about the potential to unlock an enormous amount of private investment - from a wide range of sources - and create thousands of local construction jobs."

GreenFinanceSF will accept financing proposals from property owners on a rolling basis with the expectation that all qualified applications will be approved. For more information on GreenFinanceSF or to apply, please visit www.GreenFinanceSF.org. If you have specific questions, feel free to send an email to contact@greenfinancesf.org, or call 415-937-7223.

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→ Dreaming of a Green Christmas

Living, potted "Green Christmas Trees" are now available for only \$75 from the SF Department of the Environment and Friends of the Urban Forest!

These beautiful and unconventional trees are an environmentally friendly alternative for your holiday celebration. Cut Christmas trees (organic and conventional) aren't able to provide ongoing environmental benefits. Typical potted Christmas trees are a good choice if you have a place to plant them after the holiday season. Unfortunately, most people who live in the City don't, since these trees grow quite large and usually can't fit into a typical San Franciscan yard. Synthetic trees are usually made out of PVC (very bad for the environment) and most are manufactured and shipped from across the world.



Make all of your holiday dreams come true with Dreaming of a Green Christmas!

Our Dreaming of a Green Christmas trees are popular trees that are always planted in FUF's community tree planting programs. All of these trees will become San Francisco street trees, providing long-term environmental, social, aesthetic, and economic benefits to our city's residents.

These trees sell out fast, so order your tree soon! Then, come pick out your favorite tree, take it home and decorate it. After the holidays, return it so we can plant it on a city street!

For more information about our Dreaming of a Green Christmas program and to order your tree, visit our website: sfenvironment.org/greenchristmas.

→ Take Part in a Citywide Discussion Around Sustainability at Ideas4SF.org!

The SF Community InSight campaign now has 1,740 ideas4SF! If you haven't already posted an idea to our online forum at www.ideas4sf.org and voted for your top ideas, we

encourage you to take a moment to sign up and help us reach 2,000 ideas by 2012!

Current Top Ideas:

- 1) More Car-Free Zones
- 2) Better Public Transportation
- 3) More Bike Lanes



Jonathan's Idea4SF: "Make compost bins bigger!"

In the last month, the SF Community InSight team began working with a group of SF State Environmental Studies Senior Seminar students on InSight. Working together to collect hundreds of ideas from the SF State campus, our team of students have been an incredible addition to our team in helping us gather both offline and online support for the project.

Now it's your turn to join hundreds of San Franciscans and take part in the Department of the Environment's Community InSight Campaign by sharing your ideas of how to make San Francisco a greener and healthier place to live at www.ideas4SF.org!

By joining the discussion, posting one idea and voting on your favorite ideas, you will help to make San Francisco the most sustainable city in the world!

Environment Now! SF Residents Helping SF Residents Go Green

The SF Department of the Environment's Environment Now team has just completed an extensive door-to-door outreach campaign in the Sunset District and is now shifting gears to the Bernal Heights and Visitacion Valley neighborhoods. Residents of these neighborhoods can be on the lookout for friendly Environment Now staff to answer questions on composting, recycling and household hazardous waste removal. The outreach team has resources such as kitchen compost bins to help households move closer to Zero Waste!



Jacob from Environment Now doing residential outreach in the Sunset District.

The Environment Now program is a green jobs training program designed to support eco-literacy and skills development of the trainees while promoting environmental education and outreach programs throughout the city. We are proud to announce that the

program recently graduated two associates, Lee Williams and Jayson Edwards. We wish them well on their next endeavors!

→ California Takes Action on Bisphenol-A (BPA)

Bisphenol-A, or BPA, is in the news again. BPA is a chemical additive used in consumer products ranging from product labels, dental sealants to electrical equipment and children's products. BPA is widely used to harden certain plastic containers, to resist corrosion in aluminum food cans, and to coat paper receipts. It has been linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, and been shown to mimic estrogen in our bodies. In one study, the CDC found BPA present in the urine of 93% of tested adults.



Plastic bottles may be unsafe, no matter what the label says.

The SF Department of the Environment has been following the widespread use of this chemical for years. In fact, in 2008, San Francisco adopted a resolution urging local retailers to voluntarily discontinue the sale of infant bottles and sippy cups containing BPA. Since then, several local and state governments have introduced legislation to restrict BPA in consumer products starting with children's products. With the passage of the Toxin-Free Infant and Toddlers Act (AB1319) which bans the use of BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups, California joined the list of States that have taken action on this issue.

Thanks to the continued public demand for safer products, California's vulnerable populations will no longer be exposed to BPA through plastic food containers. While this is a great first step, BPA continues to be used in dozens of other products, which means that exposure from other sources will continue. San Francisco will continue to support legislation calling for safer alternatives to be used in products. In the meantime, you can reduce your exposure by choosing BPA free products and signal the manufacturers to provide safer alternatives to consumers.

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Use the [EcoFinder](#) to find out where to recycle just about everything!

→ Last Call: SF Commercial Solar Group Buy Program Ends Dec 31st!

The [Department of the Environment](#) is supporting an exciting new commercial solar group-purchasing program called [Solar@Work](#). This innovative model was developed in partnership with the [World Resources Institute](#) to help bring down the price of solar for small and medium sized businesses and commercial properties that are unable to achieve economies of scale enjoyed by larger systems.



Solar@Work

Program participants will be able to access the discounted group price and affordable financing options. Through the program's market-leading solar lease option, commercial property owners can install solar with little to \$0 upfront costs and be cash positive from day 1! To sign-up now, [visit the Solar@Work website at www.solaratwork.net.](#)

→ Create Your Home Energy Profile

You've heard us talking about the [SF Home Improvement & Performance program](#), and now's the time to [get started](#). We have a new tool to help you take the first step toward energy efficiency! Now you can [create an energy profile of your home](#).

At the end of our simple 5-minute survey, you'll know if you are a good candidate for this program and you'll find a directory of participating contractors who can conduct your home assessment and show you how to earn up to \$11,000 for your energy upgrade.



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→ San Francisco Composting Program Reaches Million-Ton Milestone

Last month, the City's green-waste collection company, [Recology](#) hauled away its millionth ton of biodegradable waste! City officials and representatives from [Recology](#) stood by as four green bins filled with an assortment of restaurant leftovers from [Scoma's](#) restaurant were poured into a



[Recology](#) waste transport truck. [Scoma's](#) has been a longtime participant in San Francisco's composting program, which has grown in popularity and acceptance since the pilot program launched in the mid 1990's. Alexa Kielty, Zero Waste Coordinator for the [Department of the Environment](#) said composting helps build a healthy soil, reduces greenhouse gas production and in turn helps produce healthy food. In 2009, mandatory composting became a requirement and over 90 cities across the world have created similar laws following San Francisco's example.

The food scraps, or what is left over from dinner at a restaurant or what went bad in the refrigerator, are composted and sent on to farms and vineyards in Northern California. Mike Sangiacomo, [Recology's](#) president and CEO said that 78% of material collected citywide in curbside bins is composted, recycled or reused - the highest diversion rate in the nation.

In [Scoma's](#) kitchen, chef and buyer Kelly Bennett keeps several large green bins in the prep room alongside a pint-size black trash basket, which receives just 5% of the restaurant's waste. He said he remembered when [Scoma's](#) first joined [Recology's](#) compost collection program eight years ago. At the time, Bennett supplied his staff with a small green waste bucket to accompany the trash bin. Bennett said that what [Scoma's](#) learned quickly was that "what we needed was a big green bin and a tiny black bin."

→ SFE Launches "Don't Take the Bait!" Campaign

There's more than one way to kill a rat. [The Department of the Environment](#) is asking City retailers and consumers to avoid buying or selling certain kinds of common rat & mouse baits, which the [US Environmental](#)

Protection Agency has determined pose an "unreasonable risk" to children, pets, and the environment. These are [very common products](#) with well established hazards sold in large quantities nationwide, and are still on store shelves.



The EPA had originally set a June 4, 2011 deadline for manufacturers to stop selling these products, however, the manufacturer of D-Con has set out to challenge Federal law and delay the removal of these products from the shelves - possibly for years.

Don't Take the Bait!

In September, [the Department of the Environment](#) sent letters to about 130 local retailers asking for their cooperation. So far, 87 stores have stepped forward to voluntarily discontinue the products ([see our list of retail leaders](#) and [our pledge form here](#)). Supervisor [Malia Cohen](#) passed a resolution last month on the subject, and now the Department is reaching out to consumers with [this flyer](#).

And what about the rats? The [Department of the Environment](#) recommends sealing off all potential entryways, removing food sources, and using old-fashioned snap traps to start with. If that's not enough, call a licensed professional, preferably one certified by [EcoWise](#), [GreenShield](#), or [GreenPro](#). For more details, [vist our FAQ page here](#).

→ Taking Existing San Francisco Homes to Zero Net Energy

The [Department of the Environment](#) has just released a report studying pathways to zero net energy for the city's existing single family and 2-4 unit buildings.

The feasibility of taking existing San Francisco homes to zero net energy was validated in this study. Data from two current home energy retrofit programs, along with independent testing on 2-4-unit homes, plus interviews with home performance experts and experienced San Francisco contractors, were used to group



energy efficiency measures into three technically feasible "pathways" to zero net energy. The pathways were based on the compatibility among the measures proposed in each pathway, and the likelihood that they would be adopted together by a homeowner with certain priorities and preferences. The pathways were then associated with one of three "personas" characterizing different types of customers in the marketplace.

Energy models of the pathways were created for both a modest and a deep retrofit. To verify the ability to reach zero net energy, the energy requirements of the homes after the proposed deep retrofits were compared against the solar potential of typical homes in San Francisco, which was in most cases sufficient to meet the remaining demand with on-site solar.

The study also reviews numerous characteristics of San Francisco's housing stock and highlights their effects on home performance. Energy efficiency issues and opportunities in 2- to 4-unit homes are also summarized.

The abstract and report, titled "San Francisco Zero Net Energy Homes," can be downloaded from the [San Francisco Department of Environment](#) website. The work was funded through a grant from the [Living Cities Foundation](#).

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