

To: Members of the Board of the MEA
c/o Dawn Weisz, Interim Executive Director

April 2, 2009

Re: Launching local Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy & Green Job Training.

Members of the Board:

The time is ripe to launch local Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy & Green Job Training in Marin. These three goals of the MEA coincide with three targets of the federal ARRA stimulus funds. Essential ingredients of a successful program are:

1. Train energy auditors and building performance contractors.
2. Set standards for energy efficiency retrofits to save energy and for appropriate renewable energy generation .
3. Market the cost effectiveness of these upgrades to property owners.
4. Coordinate financing.
5. Monitor and verify results measuring Negawatts saved and Megawatts produced.
6. Prepare to launch a similar program to save water.

This program does not have to cost the County or any municipality a cent. In fact, it should be a source of attracting grant money. The program will pay for itself. Sonoma has just launched the first AB811 program in the state without out spending any money from general funds. The costs of administration are rolled into the tax-based loans to property owners who themselves will be saving money from day 1 by lower utility bills. Sonoma just trained thirty contractors who practiced their Green Home Energy Retrofit skills on the home of the Mayor of Santa Rosa (Susan Gorin is not to be outdone by Charles McGlashan!).

Marin needs to take its place among the counties who are leading the Green Building revolution in California, and we are in a good position to do so. Among our citizens are Green Building professionals who are at the cutting edge of Building Performance Science and of High Performance Building Design. We could in short order plan and implement one or more exemplary energy retrofits of existing buildings and even design and build one or more exemplary high performance buildings. These projects would not necessarily be very expensive or time-consuming, and they could quickly put Marin on the map toward realizing the ambitious energy goals set by MEA, the State of California, and the U.S. Such projects would also be strategic marketing to popularize the kind of retrofits and construction which needs to proliferate rapidly through the buildings in our communities providing abundant work for underemployed citizens, raising property values and lowering utility bills.

I hope you will appreciate the opportunity the MEA has now within reach for making a real difference in building practices, energy use and climate change.

Regards, Peter Waring
Healthier Dwelling, Fairfax (415)717-5697

