



POWERMATTERS

Innovative Natural Gas Program Fuels Region

ABAG POWER's Core Aggregation Program fulfills members' needs for price stability and a reliable source of natural gas. This unique natural gas program pools the resources of the region's local governments to purchase natural gas in bulk from third party suppliers. The program purchases gas up to three years in advance to lock in prices and provide more cost certainty to members. This purchasing strategy helps members with their annual budgeting process, unlike the monthly fluctuations experienced as a utility customer.

As an added incentive, ABAG POWER monitors regulatory and legislative proceedings and evaluates new Pool purchasing options as they develop. Pool members own and operate the Pool and are directly involved with the ABAG POWER Executive Committee, providing policy guidance and formulating future purchasing recommendations. Fees to cover the program's operational expenses are set annually by the Executive Committee. These fees cover expenses such as gas scheduling and management, billing services, legal services, and administration. Membership fees currently represent approximately 3.3 percent of the program budget.

While maintaining relatively low fees, ABAG POWER offers a wealth of services including natural gas purchasing and commodity management, nominations, balancing, storage, and pipeline rebrokering. In June 2006, ABAG POWER began handling the billing system and customer calls internally using a combination of Electronic

Data Interchange (EDI) software, utility data management software, and ABAG's internal Oracle accounting system. ABAG POWER's internal billing system allows increased analysis options and overall enhanced customer service to members.



ABAG POWER Meeting 2007

ABAG Staff Photo



*Natural Gas Flame
Photo: Clipart.com*

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) continues to provide meter reading, "on the ground" repair and maintenance, and emergency response to all participants. Membership in the natural gas program does not change participants' current priority of service with PG&E, quality of natural gas, overall reliability of service, and performance of maintenance.

ABAG POWER's natural gas program is an example of ABAG's collaborative and innovative service to member jurisdictions. The program currently serves 38 local jurisdictions and special districts. For more information or to sign up for the natural gas program, contact Jerry Lahr, Program Manager, 510/464-7908 or e-mail jerryl@abag.ca.gov.

ABAG POWER

ABAG Energy Watch Leads to Energy Efficiency

A United Nations' report issued in February concluded that human activity has contributed to a rapid rise in global temperatures over the last 50 years. To combat this problem, California Assembly Bill 32 enacts the Global Warming Act of 2006, which creates a statewide greenhouse gas emission limit to reduce emissions 25 percent (1990 levels) by 2020. As California strives to identify how to meet AB 32 goals, the ABAG Energy Watch Program, a joint project with Pacific Gas and Electric Company, assists local governments in reducing their energy use, thereby reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. By aggregating various energy-saving measures into comprehensive packages, ABAG Energy Watch seeks to reduce energy use in agencies by at least 20 percent.

The program helps local governments implement cost-effective, energy-saving measures such as lighting, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) projects; optimization of water pump and motor operations; and computer energy management optimization. One key benefit is facility energy-use analyses, which includes greenhouse gas emission quantification. Implementation



Street Lighting and mixed use building Photo: ABAG

assistance for retrofits and retrocommissioning, which aims to optimize operation of existing building mechanical equipment, are also offered. Dedicated incentives to help pay for energy-efficiency projects and assistance in obtaining contractor services and project financing are also available.

ABAG Energy Watch technical assistance is free to eligible, enrolled local governments. Currently serving 55

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Energy-Efficient Product Procurement Policies & Strategies

A key element of the ABAG Energy Watch program is to provide assistance with developing policies for procurement of energy-efficient products. Local governments interested in adopting a new energy-efficiency policy, or implementing one that is already on the books, can benefit from ABAG Energy Watch's procurement services.

The program helps participating local governments identify policies that promote the procurement of energy-efficient lighting supplies, appliances, heating and cooling



Lighting at Shopping Center Photo: PBIC Library/Dan Burden

equipment, computers, copiers, and other types of office equipment. ABAG Energy Watch can help with the creation of procurement guidelines, setting efficiency standards for fixtures, lamps, and ballasts for all new construction. This includes renovation and equipment retrofit projects, as well as those to be certified under the US Green Building Council's LEED standards.

Procurement services offered through ABAG Energy Watch feature development of bid specifications for energy-using equipment and technical support on bid evaluation and contract development. Training for government employees about energy-efficiency policies, procurement guidelines, and programs may also be provided. The program tracks the usage of new energy-efficient technologies and reports the resulting energy and greenhouse gas reductions, cost-savings, and other ancillary benefits.

ABAG Energy Watch is a joint project between ABAG and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. If your agency would like assistance developing a new procurement policy or any other service described in this article, please contact Jerry Lahr, Program Manager, 510/464-7908 or jerry1@abag.ca.gov.

Big/Bold Strategies for Energy Efficiency

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is calling for “Big/Bold Strategies” to achieve cost-effective energy efficiency in an accelerated timeframe. In response to this call for “Big Bold Strategies,” the Association of Bay Area Governments, along with the City of Berkeley, the City and County of San Francisco, the Local Government Commission, and other agencies have recommended that specific statewide Local Government Initiatives be adopted including code and ordinance changes.

These recommendations seek to ensure that energy-efficiency programs are integrated at the local level and take into consideration that governments deal with all resources, impacts, and institutions, including healthcare, education, jobs, and economies, at the local level. “Since energy efficiency and conservation are cornerstones of climate protection, it is important to integrate energy efficiency with regional and local programs,” says Jerry Lahr, ABAG POWER Program Manager.

Recommended statewide Local Government Initiatives include implementing code and ordinance changes that would accelerate additional energy-efficiency and ensure compliance with Title 24, the energy efficiency standard for residential and nonresidential buildings. Local governments can assist in meeting state goals by providing local resources and programs for residential and commercial energy efficiency, fully accessing new construction incentives, and implementing Green Building programs and policies. Local Government Initiatives would develop existing local government partnerships and add partnership programs and strategies building upon current models. Local government and public agency experience could also be used to further commercial building energy efficiency.

These proposed “Big/Bold Strategies” are currently being reviewed by CPUC and the final strategies for implementation will be determined later this year.

Lighting Retrofit Projects Conserve Energy

Case Study:

San Mateo County is one of the counties implementing lighting improvement projects with the help of ABAG Energy Watch and taking advantage of the opportunity to conserve energy and save money.

ABAG Energy Watch has conducted lighting audits at six San Mateo County facilities: the San Mateo Medical Center, the Maguire Correctional Facility, three major office building sites, and the San Carlos Airport. The first project is being conducted at 455 County Center in Redwood City, the office that houses the assessors, records, and public works functions. Linear fluorescent fixtures that operated with three lamps will be replaced with new, high-grade fixtures that contain only two lamps. These new “third generation” fluorescent lamps are more efficient and last longer, and the new “extra efficient” electronic ballasts provide more lumens per watt. These changes will both save energy and improve lighting quality. It is estimated that the fixture replacement project will reduce the building’s lighting electricity use by 47 percent and the resulting energy savings will pay back the retrofit cost in eight years. (For the County buildings that have received ABAG Energy Watch recommendations to date, the average lighting electricity use reduction is 39 percent and the average project payback is four and one half years). In addition,

San Mateo County is also receiving ABAG Energy Watch rebates for conducting these retrofits.

San Mateo County’s lighting improvement project demonstrates how ABAG Energy Watch helps local governments identify and prioritize energy-efficiency projects and use free resources available from state and utility energy-efficiency programs to implement the projects. Energy conservation and cost savings have been achieved in San Mateo County through a collaborative effort with a skilled team. ABAG Energy Watch conducted the building survey and prepared the audit recommendations. The County then reviewed the recommendations with ABAG Energy Watch and decided what actions to take. Once retrofit actions were determined and County staff obtained the necessary approvals, the County used the specifications provided by ABAG Energy Watch to bid out the project. Project installation is now underway.

San Mateo County’s lighting retrofit is just one example of the many services provided by ABAG Energy Watch, a joint project between ABAG and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The partnership is designed to assist local governments that own or lease facilities, including but not limited to administrative offices, recreation centers, fire stations, libraries, and equipment such as traffic lights.

POWER Management

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enrollees in Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties, ABAG Energy Watch is open and available to new enrollees. The program will operate through December 31, 2008, or until funding is depleted, whichever occurs first. To enroll in ABAG Energy Watch, contact Jerry Lahr, Program Manager, 510/464-7908 or jerry1@abag.ca.gov. For more on ABAG's Climate Change Strategy, go to http://www.abag.ca.gov/jointpolicy/jpc_climate_change.htm.

California consumers are not obligated to purchase any full fee service or other service not funded by this program. This program is funded by California utility ratepayers under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).



New Construction at Lake Merritt, Oakland Photo: ABAG Staff

GAS PURCHASING POOL PARTICIPANTS

Cities/Towns

City of Alameda
City of Albany
City of Benicia
City of Cupertino
City of Fremont
City of Gonzales
City of Half Moon Bay
City of Hercules
City of Los Altos
City of Mill Valley
City of Millbrae
City of Milpitas

City of Monte Sereno
City of Oakland
City of Orinda
City of Pacifica
City of Petaluma
City of Pleasanton
City of Richmond
City of Salinas
City of San Carlos
City of San Rafael
City of Santa Rosa
City of Saratoga
City of Union City

City of Vallejo
City of Watsonville
City of Winters
Town of Atherton
Town of Moraga

Counties

County of Contra Costa
County of Napa
County of San Mateo
County of Santa Clara

Special Districts

Eastside Union High School District
Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District
Regional Administration Facility Corporation
Vallejo Sanitation & Flood Control

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