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Initiative Launches to FIRE SDGE! Aims to Create a Non-Profit Utility

SAN DIEGO - The Power San Diego Campaign today published its initiative to replace SDGE in the City with a not-for-profit, publicly-owned electric utility. Signature gathering to qualify the initiative for the City's November ballot will begin in December.

"This is a campaign for those tired of paying the nation's highest electric rates, for those tired of paying to provide more than \$1 million of profits every day pocketed by SDGE," said Bill Powers, chairman of the ballot campaign.

"It's a campaign to cut utility bills and tap the enormous rooftop solar potential in our community. The Power San Diego campaign will bring a proven, not-for-profit model to San Diego, a model already providing cheaper electricity to millions across our country."

California has an array of non-profit electric utilities, including in Sacramento, Los Angeles and smaller cities.

"The public utilities around our state are different but they share one characteristic," said Dorrie Bruggemann, the Power San Diego campaign manager. "They all charge less - in some cases hundreds of dollars less each month- than SDGE."

Studies indicate a non-profit utility in the City of San Diego could save individuals hundreds of dollars each year, while helping to expand clean, renewable electricity.

SDGE is on track to extract more than \$440 million in profits this year from the pockets of the city's utility customers. Making matters worse, SDGE expects their rates to continue rising by 10 percent each year.

As San Diegans pay the steep price of ever-rising profits for SDGE's shareholders, one in four customers have fallen behind in their utility bills, racking up an average \$600 in back payments due.

Wider availability of rooftop solar could cut costs for hundreds of thousands and help fight climate change. But SDGE has pressed for cuts in solar programs and supported utility taxes to make going solar much harder.

Why? Because rooftop solar threatens SDGE's profits.

As a non-profit, Power San Diego would encourage the expansion of rooftop and parking lot solar.

(MORE)

It's time for a change.

The campaign's citizens ballot initiative will create a not-for-profit power electric distribution utility in the City, to be known as "Power San Diego", that will replace SDGE's expensive electric service.

Power San Diego would be directed by a five-member board with oversight by a Citizens Oversight Committee. The not-for-profit utility would need experienced workers and expects to fill most positions with former SDGE staff.

The new utility will welcome union representation and pay employees compensation and benefits equal to or better than those in their current collective bargaining agreements.

Power San Diego's mission will be to serve the needs of San Diegans, be a good union employer and keep rates as low as possible, while protecting the environment. It will not need to satisfy demands for ever-growing profits from Wall Street investors.

Not-for-profit electric utilities continue to form around the country. Over thirty have been established in the US in recent decades, including New York's Long Island Power Authority, which services far more customers than the City of San Diego.

In addition to providing lower rates, not-for-profit utilities are ranked high in customer satisfaction surveys. SDGE, meanwhile, ranks lowest the West on customer satisfaction.

Studies commissioned by the City of San Diego project that establishing a public power utility is feasible and a money saver. The Power San Diego campaign will conduct a signature drive to get its initiative on the ballot and, just as important, let residents know we have a choice: San Diego can have a utility that is accountable to its customers and provides affordable, reliable service!

The campaign to get the initiative on the ballot November of 2024 will require just over 80,000 signatures. Signature collection will begin December 7th and continue through May. A formal kick-off and signature-collection training event will be held at First Unitarian Church on Dec. 5th.

Power San Diego is an initiative launched by advocates and experts, along with a growing number of consumer, environmental and community groups. The campaign encourages SDGE's customers in the City to visit our website, wearepowersandiego.com, and learn how they can contribute to firing SDGE and create a not-for-profit utility in our community.