

**Democratic Socialists of America – San Diego**

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Mr. Lee Friedman  
Strategic Energy Initiatives Manager  
City of San Diego  
Smart and Sustainable Communities Branch  
VIA EMAIL: [lfriedman@sandiego.gov](mailto:lfriedman@sandiego.gov)

Re: Request for Expressions of Interest for Gas & Electric Services (1/21/20)

Dear Mr. Lee Friedman, Mayor Kevin Faulconer, Council President Gomez, and Members of the San Diego City Council,

While most Americans receive power from private companies, most utility companies in the United States are publicly owned. The largest is the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power. Almost all utilities were municipal services until World War I, when private companies took over urban electricity systems. This left rural areas dark until FDR's Rural Electrification Act of 1936 built the remaining infrastructure. We propose a utility company for San Diego that is neither unique nor uncommon. In the words of former California Public Utilities Commission president Loretta Lynch, "Public power is generally cheaper, safer, cleaner, and – with some exceptions – more reliable."

Public Power for San Diego is a project of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) - San Diego. DSA San Diego (<http://www.dsasandiego.org>) is a volunteer-led political activist organization. It is a chapter of DSA, the largest socialist group in the United States and a registered 501(c)4. In the current effort, we align with Boston's Take Back the Grid (<http://www.takebackthegrid.org/>) and the San Francisco Bay Area DSA campaign, Let's Own the Grid (<https://letsownpge.org/>) in encouraging our neighbors and the representatives who serve them to reclaim our energy system as a public good -- run democratically, with all benefits accruing to our community.

The RFEI invites the public to "help the City and its expert consultants draft and develop a contemporary and attractive franchise that will secure additional benefits..." First among these benefits, we submit, should be public ownership as a public good. Second should be management of the utility in a democratic fashion. Third should be an investment strategy which dedicates surplus revenue to local purposes, such as building out decentralized, renewable energy sources and storage, and introducing solar and retrofitting clean energy infrastructure to communities of concern -- all while preserving the existing benefits, standing, and rights of the unionized workforce.

We propose a publicly owned utility which protects the people and environment of San Diego without the existential need for profit that drives an investor-owned corporation. We propose a utility which invests revenue in its employees and in meeting the 2035 clean energy goal set by the

City Council. We have the only proposal which serves the people of San Diego first, and we look forward to presenting it to you and our neighbors.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours truly,

Ramon Bieri  
Co-Chair, Democratic Socialists of America – San Diego  
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