



Empowering a League of Locals for Action

THE BAY AREA TURN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

WHEN SYLVIA SIEGEL FIRST decided to challenge the arrogance of large, investor-owned utility companies, she knew that she couldn't tackle them alone. She'd need allies who were just as determined to keep utilities in check, protecting customers from unreasonable rate increases and fighting for high quality service. That's why, at her kitchen table, she began creating a network of supporters—friends who were just as outraged as she was by corporate lack of accountability. They assessed their skills and connections and started building what would become the only independent statewide utility consumer advocacy organization in California, TURN.

Nearly 40 years later at The Utility Reform Network offices where Sylvia's work continues, community activists old and new gathered around a conference table to lend their expertise to the creation of a new initiative, the Bay Area TURN Leadership Council (TLC). In attendance: representatives from California Alliance for Retired Americans, Senior Action Network, and the Central City SRO Collaborative, TURN executive director Mark Toney and TURN organizing director Ana Montes.

Benjamin Toney, a TURN summer intern, consumer advocate, and the organizer of the event, said, "The formation of the TLC represents a major step in our efforts to become a more member-driven organization. Combining the power of TURN's legal team and the energy of local activists enhances TURN's effectiveness," he said, adding, "The approach allows TURN to not

only fight for consumers' interests, but also to help balance the power between companies and their customers."

Historically, TURN has been an organization of attorneys fighting for legislation and policies that benefit consumers. However, at the beginning of 2008, TURN's leadership decided to incorporate a grassroots component into its overarching strategy to better educate and mobilize California ratepayers on telecommunications and energy issues.

TLCs, starting with the Bay Area group, will be key in future efforts to reach underrepresented communities and broaden community partnerships. While some of their work will depend on the needs of the regions they serve, most will be counted on to:

TLCs, starting with the Bay Area group, will be key in future efforts to reach underrepresented communities and broaden community partnerships. While some of their work will depend on the needs of the regions they serve, most will be counted on to:

- Organize consumers to speak out at CPUC meetings and hearings

"We all need to become leaders who step up and fight for the rights and interests of the people."

— Jan Howe, CA Assoc. for Retired Americans

League on



Getting to Know All About You

We always enjoy hearing from TURN members. The letters and cards (and sometimes even photos!) you send our way show that you're passionate, engaged, and, that when it comes to consumer advocacy, you really mean business.

While we glean a lot from your correspondence, we thought we'd take a more direct approach to understanding your priorities by conducting a member survey. Two thousand of you responded to 21 questions about yourselves and about TURN, telling us the issues that matter to you most and what you think we do right. We carefully read every word of your responses and tabulated the results. Below are a few highlights from our findings.

RESULTS FROM TURN'S MEMBER SURVEY

- Educate consumers on how to handle shut offs, high bills, and disputes with their utility companies
- Hold community meetings on policy issues
- Grow TURN's network of community-based allies
- Recruit individual members

The TLCs will also be listening carefully to consumers to bring back on-the-ground views and opinions. The new stream of community feedback will further ensure that consumer concerns set TURN's highest priorities.

"This is an excellent opportunity for local leadership development, but more importantly, this is a chance to help consumers take back power," said Denise D'Anne, who has been an activist with TURN for many years.

Jan Howe of the California Association for Retired Americans agreed. "In a corporate climate such as this, where companies have nearly unbridled power, we all need to become leaders who step up and fight for the rights and the interests of the people."

WHY YOU ARE A MEMBER OF TURN?

Our advocacy means the most to you. In fact, 57% of you indicated that our speaking up for you, the consumer, was the primary reason you are a TURN member. Second most popular answer: our fighting big utility companies on your behalf (45%).

TURN'S BIGGEST WIN IN 2010?

More than half of you (55%) told us that our leading the defeat of Proposition 16, PG&E's attempt to create a monopoly for itself, was TURN's most impressive achievement last year. Prevailing against a \$46 million dollar advertising campaign on a shoestring budget of \$90,000 took some doing, and TURN members really came through. Second most popular answer: TURN's work in fighting unfair rate hikes.

TURN'S EFFECTIVENESS?

According to your responses, TURN is definitely making the right moves at the CPUC and in the halls of government: 71% of you rate us as "effective" or "very effective"!



green matters

Clean, Green Windpower that Customers Can Afford

TURN FORGES DEAL FOR SDG&E CUSTOMERS

The promise of green energy is power that is both clean and affordable, but a proposal for a new wind farm was neither. San Diego Gas & Electric wanted customers to foot the bill for an overblown, overpriced \$600 million wind farm that wouldn't actually deliver any energy to San Diego or anywhere else in California. The plant would be built in Rim Rock, Montana, the power was slated for Canada, but the costs would be borne by California consumers. In return they would get renewable energy credits, rather than actual clean energy, from their investment after it went operational.

TURN objected to the high costs of the proposed wind farm and demanded that SDG&E scale back the project and build it at a much lower cost to customers. Rather than nix the deal completely, TURN fought for and won major consumer concessions that will help shape future renewable power purchases by utility companies and provide lower cost green power for San Diego customers.

The Rim Rock wind farm will be built on a smaller scale and cost less than half of what SDG&E originally proposed. Utility customers will cover part of the cost of

the plant, but, in an unprecedented arrangement, part of the financing for the plant will come from profits that would otherwise go to shareholders. This set-up will actually allow SDG&E to save money on financing the plant. The changes won by TURN in financing arrangements and in the size of the plant will save customers \$350 million.

TURN objected to the high costs of the proposed wind farm.

TURN's objections to the project's use of renewable energy credits, rather than creation of actual green energy with resultant jobs and other benefits in California, were addressed with an agreement that limits SDG&E's use of such credits in the future. That means more of the jobs and other benefits of new renewable generation will stay in California rather than go out-of-state.

"The unique deal forged by TURN means customers, who share in the costs of renewable energy, will also share in the financial and environmental benefits," said TURN staff attorney Matt Freedman. "When the plant does become profitable, customers will recoup their investment before shareholders do." Freedman says this additional protection will maximize incentives for the utility to operate the plant efficiently and profitably, and will deliver benefits for SDG&E's customers for years to come.

staff bio

JEFFREY JOHNSON

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

CONTACT:

adminassistant@turn.org

Jeffrey Johnson joined TURN as administrative assistant in August 2011, taking on a wide variety of tasks including organizing and maintaining the database, legal filings, tracking attorney hours and running reports, taking calls, and keeping the office, and TURN's staff, organized.

Jeffrey comes with a wealth of experience in the legal industry having worked as a litigation, probate, and estate planning paralegal for more than 20 years, as well as years of experience as a copywriter and editor. Jeffrey is also a freelance writer, having published articles on a range of subjects, from Cuban cigars to uranium reserves in Iran. He also brings experience in the nonprofit world as an active volunteer with various nonprofit organizations. He received his bachelor's degree in English from San Jose State University.



TURN Gets You More Green for Your Green

Renewable energy doesn't have to cost and arm and a leg. TURN's unique approach to green energy takes care of your pocketbook and the planet at the same time by demanding maximum value for every dollar the utilities spend on renewables.

Please use the attached envelope to support our work and make California a cleaner, greener place to live.