



# The SLO Green Scene

SLO GREEN BUILD'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

Spring 2009

## Green Build Events & Meetings:

### GREEN PEER REVIEW

FREE REVIEW OF PROJECTS BY LOCAL GREEN  
BUILDING PROFESSIONALS

April 21, May 19 & June 16, 2009  
5:00-6:30 PM

LOCATION: Ludwick Comm. Center, Room "A"  
864 Santa Rosa Street, San Luis Obispo  
CONTACT: [peer-review@slogreenbuild.org](mailto:peer-review@slogreenbuild.org)  
(PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE AT  
LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS IN ADVANCE)

### LEED RESOURCE GROUP

April 17, May 15 & June 19, 2009  
12:00-1:00 PM

Bring your lunch and discuss LEED topics  
LOCATION: RRM Design Group, 3765 South  
Higuera Street, Suite 2, San Luis Obispo  
CONTACT: Andy Pease:  
[andy@inbalancegreen.com](mailto:andy@inbalancegreen.com)

### SLOGB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April 8, May 13 & June 10, 2009  
6:30-8:30 PM

LOCATION: Air Pollution Control District  
Conference Room, 3433 Roberto Ct., SLO  
CONTACT: Lana Adams @805.286.0072 or  
[admin@slogreenbuild.org](mailto:admin@slogreenbuild.org)

### GREEN BUILDING ALLIANCE

April 1, May 6 & June 3, 2009  
5:00-6:30 PM

LOCATION: The Club House at This Old House  
740 W. Foothill, SLO  
CONTACT: Turko Semmes @805.466.6737  
x202 or Kevin Hauber @805.459.8844

Send your events to: [Events@SLOGreenBuild.org](mailto:Events@SLOGreenBuild.org)

## Financing Energy Improvements & Green Jobs Under AB 811

By, Nick Alter

### THE VISION

Imagine being able to get a quick-turn-around, 20-year, fixed-rate, below-market loan to finance energy improvements in your home or business without having to get an appraisal or make a down payment. Imagine, too, being able to offset the cost of your loan with savings from these energy improvements, and to bundle loan payments with semi-annual property-tax payments. Now drop any concerns about investing in a property you might be selling one day, since the energy savings and the loan stay with the property, not with the owner. Mix in energy-improvement rebates (under the Energy Star program and the California Solar Initiative), and you've got a recipe for cutting energy use and costs while stimulating job-creation and a clean-energy local economy. Along with other State incentives, such is the promise of Assembly Bill 811 for SLO County.

### WHAT IS AB 811?

Enacted in July 2008, AB 811 authorizes California local governments to create "assessment districts" to finance "distributed generation renewable energy sources or energy efficiency improvements" that are permanently affixed to residential, commercial, industrial or other private real property. In other words, financing would cover solar panels, window replacement, a new furnace, insulation, lighting upgrades and other improvements that increase comfort while decreasing energy costs for existing buildings.

To create an AB 811 assessment district – also referred to as a "sustainable energy financing district" – the local municipality may obtain funds from any available source, including the issuance of bonds, and may use the funds to finance the improvements directly or lend funds directly to eligible property owners.

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## NEW TAX CREDITS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT RESIDENTIAL UPGRADES

By, John Ewan

With concern about climate change and energy dependence growing, new and expanded tax incentives for energy-efficient and renewable-energy home improvements have been included in the Federal Stimulus package. Up to \$1,500 in tax credits for adding qualifying windows, doors, insulation, roofs, heating and cooling equipment, water heaters and even wood and pellet stoves to your house are available in 2009 and 2010.

Expanded credits for installing solar technology, small wind-energy systems or a geothermal system provide for a full 30% tax credit on qualifying expenditures with no upper limit through 2016.

Unlike tax deductions, these incentives are tax credits, which lower your customer's tax bill dollar-for-dollar, versus a tax deduction, which only reduces taxable income. The Internal Revenue Service will issue firm guidelines on details of the credits

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## TAX CREDITS

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soon, so be sure to verify the credit before promoting or purchasing a product.

There are two types of credits being promoted. First is energy efficiency, which pertains to improvements to an existing home's structural elements, such as windows and insulation, as well as for the purchase of qualifying high-efficiency heating, cooling and water-heating equipment. Second is the renewable energy credit, which includes solar, wind, geothermal and fuel-cell technologies.

The energy-efficiency tax credit increases to 30% of qualifying costs from 10%, and the cap also rises to \$1,500 from \$500 (a \$1,500 total credit for all applicable improvements combined in 2009 and 2010). Now included in the credit are stoves that use renewable biomass fuel -- wood, pellets, plants -- as well as certain roofing materials; installation costs may be included depend-

ing on the appliance and the IRS guidelines being developed. Energy efficient appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers and clothes washers are not eligible. The \$1,500 efficiency credits do not apply to new construction but the renewable-energy credit and a separate energy-savings incentive is applicable. The single greatest change is the removal of the \$2,000 cap from the 30% renewable-energy credit for systems installed after 2008.

Manufacturers are introducing new qualifying products such as Heat Pump electric water heaters and 95% efficient tank type gas water heaters. All will need to be tested to government standards of energy efficiency in order to qualify for the new tax credits.

For Green Build Businesses and consumers, this presents a new opportunity to promote a "green" energy-efficient product against a

## Energy Efficiency Incentives:

- Energy-efficiency upgrades to existing buildings -- windows, insulation and weatherization -- are eligible for a tax credit of 30% for qualifying costs up to \$1,500.
- Renewable-energy systems -- solar, wind and geothermal -- qualify for an uncapped 30% tax credit.
- Efficient heating stoves that use renewable biomass fuel -- wood, pellets, plants -- will qualify for a Tax Credit

less costly (in the short term) less efficient appliance "norm." With additional consumer interest and government support we may well be one step closer to "every building being a green building."

## AB 811

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### ESTABLISHING AN AB 811 FINANCING PROGRAM

To establish an AB 811 financing program, a municipality's legislative body must first adopt a resolution that includes a description of the geographic boundaries of the financing program, a list of the renewable-energy and energy-efficiency improvements to be financed in the program, and an explanation of the municipality's plan to raise the needed capital. The municipality must then hold a public hearing on the proposed program, after which its legislative body can adopt the program as proposed, direct it to be modified for adoption, or decide against adoption.

The process by which property owners and/or developers opt into an approved AB 811 assessment district and financing program is determined by the municipality.

### EXISTING AB 811 PROGRAMS

With new construction down and energy costs going up, financing incentives are needed to turn this situation around. From Napa to San Diego, a number of counties and cities are considering AB 811 financing programs. While the City of Berkeley was the first to approve the concept and to implement a pilot effort, the City of Palm

Desert's Energy Independence Program (EIP), adopted in August 2008, is the most developed and comprehensive model.

Palm Desert's Office of Energy Management administers the EIP and makes loans available for a broad range of "Energy Improvements," including solar systems and custom energy measures. Property owners apply directly to the Office of Energy Management for EIP loans to buy and install Energy Improvements. Installation costs for Energy Improvements include labor, drafting, engineering, permit fees, inspection and other such charges. Either a qualified contractor or the property owner may do the installing, which must be completed within 180 days after executing an assessment agreement.

To finance the EIP loans, Palm Desert established a Loan Program Fund that may accept funds from any available source. Assessment installments replenish the Loan Program Fund and may be used either to reimburse Palm Desert for funds it advances into the Fund or to underwrite more EIP loans.

Other communities that are following in the footsteps of Palm Desert include the county and city of San Diego, Solana Beach, Encinitas and Napa.

### HOW ABOUT AB 811 IN SLO?

As a member of the "2030 Challenge Coalition," SLO Green Build has joined with the Central Coast Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, the SLO County Air Pollution Control District and other organizations, to advocate for initiatives that advance sustainable development in our county. Chief among such initiatives is the implementation of a sustainable energy financing district. 75% of the 110,000 housing units in our county were built more than 20 years ago when the State's energy efficiency standards (Title 24) were either non-existent or much lower than they are today. These are among our area's biggest and best opportunities for cutting energy usage and costs, for putting contractors back to work, and for stimulating a local clean-energy industry. SLO Green Build and its coalition partners urge local governments to move swiftly ahead with consideration of an AB 811 program in our county. We also encourage you, the reader, to urge elected officials in your jurisdiction to do the same.

Nick Alter is Vice President of SLO Green Build, a member of its board of directors, and responsible for government relations

## Peer Review Program

Peer Review is a SLO Green Build program designed to help homeowners and building professionals in the design and implementation of their green project. By reviewing the Green Building Guidelines and completing the checklist, you can determine your project's current green status. A peer review can help with technical questions and suggest ways to improve your project's energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and resource conservation.

Peer reviews are conducted by volunteer professionals with expertise in the following areas:

- Site considerations
- Architecture and Construction
- Energy, Resources and Materials
- Indoor Air Quality

There are 4 steps to participating in the Peer Review Program:

1. Review the SLO Green Build Guidelines for new home construction, home remodeling, or multi-family projects.
2. Examine the Checklist to determine how green your project is and discover how it can become even greener.
3. Fill out our Peer Review Application, sign the agreement and complete the check list to the best of your ability. The Peer Review brochure and application is available at the SLO Green Build kiosk in the lobby of each city and the county's building department.
4. Contact the peer review coordinator at least two weeks prior to the desired peer review date to schedule.

Send email to:  
peerreview@slogreenbuild.org

# Green Building Alliance Presents May 29-30 Training

Today's environmentally conscious client prefers structures that are: energy and water efficient, durable and disaster resistant, healthier and environmentally friendly. Green Advantage® certifies your knowledge of the latest in "green" building practices, technologies and techniques.

David Johnston presents a 2 full day seminar that covers Indoor Air Quality, Resource Conservation and Energy Efficiency from a builder's perspective. Using his 30 years of experience in construction, solar energy and green design, David will give you the tools to build more efficient homes that are healthy for the client and will save you and the client money.

**Indoor Air Quality** explains the chemicals used in conventional materials and finishes and what their effect on the homeowner is. David provides alternatives that are long lasting, economical and healthy.

**Resource Conservation** explains the amount of resources that are used in the conventional home building process and what impact that has on our world. David enlightens the professional with materials available on the market that save resources and energy that are, in many cases, superior to their conventional counterpart.

**Energy Efficiency** explains the need for energy efficiency in homes, being that homes use more energy and pollute more than our automobiles. David provides alternative products on the market that save energy and money.

### Curriculum

**Objective:** To educate attendees on the latest in "green" practices, technologies and techniques of residential building and prepare them for the Green Advantage® certification exam.

**Pedagogy:** Through power point presentations, David Johnston will illustrate, explain and detail the different "green" practices, technologies and techniques with diagrams, images and bulleted information, enhanced by his own experience and expertise in the field.

**Examination:** For Green Advantage® certification, attendees will complete the required 60 question examination, passing with a 75% or higher. The examination is proctored by Green Advantage®, lasts 90 minutes and must be taken within 90 days of completing the authorized training. An examination fee of \$125 is charged for the administration of the exam. The exam may be taken as many times as required to pass with a 75% or higher, but the fee of \$125 will be charged prior to each examination.

**Fee:** For Class is \$200.00 with a discount for SLOGB members.

Please contact info@slogreenbuild or 286-0072

For further information visit: [www.slogreenbuild.org/About](http://www.slogreenbuild.org/About) SLO Green Build/  
Green Building Alliance

Join the team that keeps this powerful engine running  
**VOLUNTEER TODAY!**



**LEARN • BUILD • SAVE**

**For more information contact:**

**P.O. Box 12043  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406  
tel: 805.286.0072  
fax: 805.466.6739  
admin@slogreenbuild.com**

**www.slogreenbuild.org**

**Your local non profit organization** dedicated to minimize construction-related waste, create healthier, more durable buildings, reduce operating costs, and support local businesses.

**Annual memberships to SLO Green Build are available at the following levels (please check one):**

- Cypress \$50**     **Student/Senior \$25**  
Decal, newsletter, and one complimentary copy of the Green Building Guidelines book
- Manzanita \$100**  
Above + member website listing
- Bay Laurel \$250**  
Above + one featured insert in the Green by Example binders\*
- Madrone \$500**  
Above + member resource listing and website link + member brochures displayed at SLOGB-tabled events\*
- Coastal Live Oak \$1000**  
Above + four additional featured inserts in the Green by Example binders + member logo displayed on binder's "sponsors" page\*

**NEW: Join online! [www.slogreenbuild.org](http://www.slogreenbuild.org)**

\*Green by Example binders are on display at SLOGB kiosks located throughout the county, and at SLOGB events. Please contact "admin@slogreenbuild.org" for insert, resource listing, and brochure specifications.

## Green Building Guidelines

Do you have your copy of the Green Building Guidelines?

The Guidelines are based on the Alameda County New Home Construction Green Building Guidelines, which were first developed in 2000 through a collaborative process and public-private partnership among builders, green building experts, and the staff of Green Building in Alameda County. The Guidelines have been updated to expand its applicability throughout California, address changes in Title 24, and incorporate measures from other residential green building initiatives.

The Home Remodeling and Multifamily Green Building Guidelines were developed through a partnership among local developers, architects, contractors, green building experts, and the staff of Green Building in Alameda County.

Complementing the Green Building Guidelines is Green Points, a rating system for assessing how environmentally friendly or "green" a home is. Green Points assigns point values to recommend practices in the Guidelines based on their benefits to the homeowner and the environment.

Find copies of these guidelines on SLO Green Build website, in government kiosks and for sale at SLO Green Build sponsored events.

**YES! I support SLO Green Build. Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_.** SLO Green Build is a nonprofit organization.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Profession** \_\_\_\_\_

**Company Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to: SLOGB**

Detach and mail to:  
SLO Green Build  
P.O. Box 12043  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Business members will be asked to sign a SLO Green Build "Commitment to Green Business Practices" agreement prior to being on the Web site resource listing.

For questions or more information, contact SLO Green Build by e-mail at "admin@slogreenbuild.org" or by phone at (805) 286.0072