

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 3/16/04

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**PUBLIC INTEREST ADVOCATES PRESENT CPUC WITH
20 REASONS TO END UTILITY CONTROL OF CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**
(CPUC Workshop on EE Administration, Hearing Room A 9-4pm 3/17-18)
12:30pm Wed., 3/17/04 Press Conference on CPUC steps, 505 Van Ness Ave., SF

Women's Energy Matters (WEM) is coordinating a diverse group of public interest organizations, community representatives and independent energy efficiency providers calling for the CA Public Utilities Commission to end utility control of energy efficiency.

"We want fair competition for all energy efficiency (EE) program funds instead of the lion's share going to utilities," declared Barbara George, Executive Director of WEM. "Utilities have a conflict of interest with energy efficiency, because they are required by law to maximize shareholder profits by increasing energy sales. They controlled all energy efficiency funds for 30 years, but wasted a lot of money on ineffective, overpriced programs. In a fair competition, most current utility programs would lose."

Two years ago Commissioner Lynch gave non-utility EE providers (cities, nonprofits and small businesses) a chance to show what they could do with 20% (\$50m) of the \$250m statewide EE funds. Mr. Richard Esteves, founder of SESCO, the top residential EE contractor in the US, compared 2003 quarterly reports for utility and non-utility programs. "I found that all but one of the non-utility residential programs performed better than all the utility programs; only one of the IOU programs was even 'cost-effective' (meaning ratepayers got a least \$1 of bill reductions for \$1 EE work). Utility EE programs for businesses were in a dead heat with non-utility programs." **Mr. Esteves, a Latino, created the most effective EE program ever run by a utility when GPU, owner of Three Mile Island, drastically cut energy use to reduce need for replacement power after the accident.**

Mr. Lynne Brown of Community First Coalition (CFC) and a resident of Bayview Hunters Point said, "High bills are hurting all of us, and power plant pollution is killing people in minority low-income communities." Mr. Maurice Campbell, Convenor of CFC noted, "Energy efficiency could solve both problems, but PG&E is giving EE money to business pals, and claiming savings that are not real."

Ms. Renee Saucedo, Empowerment Coordinator of La Raza Centro Legal, said, "People all over the world want the US to cut energy use and quit grabbing the world's resources. People here in this City need jobs. Good energy efficiency programs could provide many jobs for workers at all skill levels, including immigrants in our community."

Mr. Paul Fenn of Local Power, author of AB117 (Community Choice) and Prop H (SF Solar Bonds), said "Cities should have a chance to create a clean energy system, rather than being stuck with utilities who make us pay top dollar for an obsolete system that is destroying the environment and the economy." WEM and Local Power recently filed suit to enforce AB117's requirement for fair competition for EE funds.