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Oakland Joins CaliforniaFIRST to Make Energy Efficiency Retrofits Easier for Property Owners

Oakland, CA—Oakland property owners will soon have a new way to pay for energy efficiency and solar energy improvements to their homes and businesses. By enrolling in the CaliforniaFIRST program, Oakland property owners will be able to use property-secured financing to cover the installation of energy upgrades such as attic insulation, air sealing and solar electric panels, with repayment tied to their property taxes.

The Oakland City Council unanimously voted to join the CaliforniaFIRST program at their meeting on December 8th. The program is scheduled to begin in June 2010.

“Whether the issue is green technology, green jobs, electric cars or energy efficiency, the people of Oakland and our surrounding region have led the way in efforts to green this planet,” said Mayor Ron Dellums. “The CaliforniaFIRST program makes it easier for us to start greening our own homes and businesses, while serving as a model for the rest of the nation. I commend the Oakland City Council and Public Works staff for stepping up to this challenge and making this program a reality.”

Council President Jane Brunner hailed the action as good for residents, businesses and the environment. “This program will provide new choices to help Oakland property owners afford to make energy efficiency improvements to their homes and businesses. As one of the first cities to join this program, Oakland is happy to make this opportunity available and to demonstrate this innovative energy financing strategy to the rest of the country.”

The CaliforniaFIRST program is administered by the California Statewide Communities Development Authority (California Communities). Property owners will be able to voluntarily enroll in the program, receive up-front payment for authorized energy upgrades, and repay the cost of the improvements over a 10-20 year period on their property taxes. By choosing cost-effective energy upgrades, property owners can often create utility bill savings greater than loan repayment obligations.

“We need a lot of new tools to help us reach our energy and climate goals,” said Councilmember Nancy Nadel. “This program should generate new energy saving projects in Oakland, creating jobs and lowering energy bills for Oakland residents along the way. Investing in energy efficiency is a great win-win strategy.”

Further information about the program will be made available as the June program launch date approaches, and can be found at <http://www.oaklandpw.com/Page779.aspx>.

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For more information on Mayor Ron Dellums and the City of Oakland, please visit and bookmark the following Web accounts:

 : <http://www.youtube.com/ronalddellums>

 : <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ron-Dellums/98961200747>

 : <http://www.twitter.com> “Mayor Dellums”

 : <http://www.nualerts.com/clubs/mayordellums/>