

SLT council votes for 100% renewable energy

By Patricia Sussman

South Lake Tahoe on Tuesday became the 26th city in the United States and the first city in the Sierra Nevada to commit to transition to 100 percent renewable electricity, citywide.

The City Council unanimously passed the resolution to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2032 in chambers overflowing with community supporters sporting 100 percent renewable stickers.



“I have attended many City Council meetings and I have never seen such unified support for an agenda item,” said Rebecca Bryson, representing the local Small World Parent

Network. “This really demonstrates the importance of taking positive local action in an uncertain national political climate.”

Nick Exline, senior land use planner and chair of the South Lake Tahoe Climate Action Network, was among those who headed the coalition that brought the resolution before the council. Exline applauded the council for its leadership, and emphasized the marketing and branding potential associated with being among the first 30 cities in the United States to make such a commitment. He also noted its alignment with the city’s recently adopted vision statement: “We will reflect the national treasure in which we live.”

Support for the resolution was broad and included local residents associated with a variety of businesses and organizations. Among them, Joann Conner spoke on behalf of the

South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce stating the chamber board voted unanimously to support the resolution.

Steve Teshara, representative of the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce was, also present to express support of measure.

Arleen June Gordon spoke April 18 on behalf of the Senior Center and on the importance of this initiative to all generations.

Prior to the vote, the council was provided with a petition signed by nearly 1,000 individuals. The 100 percent South Lake Tahoe Coalition also organized letters of support from many local businesses and organizations.



Renewable energy proponents on April 18 surround the South Lake Tahoe City Council after the five unanimously approved the energy initiative. Photo/Provided

John Friedrich, recent participant in Tahoe's "Dancing with the Stars", wore his bright red stage jacket to the podium. In a speech reflective of the good humor of most presenters, Friedrich said, "I've never been more proud of or more excited about my hometown. I'm wearing this jacket today because I'm in the company of so many stars – here in the audience – and among council."

Executive director of the Sierra Nevada Alliance, Jenny Hatch, spoke of the Alliance's plan to promote South Lake Tahoe's

leadership on transitioning to renewable energy to other communities throughout the Sierra, hopeful of inspiring a regionwide trend. "If local communities are interested in joining this growing movement, we welcome them to contact us," she said.

Council members were appreciative that the initiative originated from within the community and of the community's commitment to stay engaged to make the goal a reality. Councilmember Tom Davis suggested that Coalition members more widely distribute the eye-catching 100 percent campaign stickers around town so that businesses can put them in their windows and people on their cars.

The Coalition that came together to create the 100 percent South Lake Tahoe campaign included multiple community residents as well as active engagement of the Sierra Nevada Alliance, Climate Reality Project's I AM PRO SNOW, Tahoe Climate Change Action Network, the Lake Tahoe Sustainability Collaborative, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Mountain Pact, Small World, and Climate Parents.

Patricia Sussman is a local resident and 100% South Lake Tahoe campaign coalition member.