



Contacts:
Bill Powers, 619-917-2941

Embargoed until:
October 8, 2025

The People Choice: Public Power Is a Winner!

Those attending the Voice of San Diego's Politifest Solutions Showdown last weekend got to hear competing views on how to lower skyrocketing electricity prices. And then attendees voted on the most persuasive case.

The winner?
Not-for-profit public power!

Public Power San Diego (PPSD) board member Bill Powers made the case that only not-for-profit public power could cut rates substantially by removing the hefty and growing profit margin for delivering electricity to our homes and businesses. PPSD has estimated rates could decrease by 20 percent immediately following a shift to public power.

Powers debated former San Diego City Manager Jack McGrory, who represented San Diego Gas & Electric, and Kellie Smith, a veteran legislative energy consultant.

McGrory emphasized that portions of the monthly electricity bills are out of SDGE's control, and said the city is unable to manage an electric utility. SDGE is a for-profit, investor-owned utility.

The former city manager's argument, however, missed a key point: PPSD's proposed not-for-profit utility would be an independent entity, not controlled by the City Council or Mayor. Independent not-for-profit utilities operate successfully elsewhere, including in the state capital, where the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, provides electricity at roughly half the price paid by SDGE customers.

(MORE)

Smith, a resident of Sacramento, gave kudos to her city's not-for-profit utility, but suggested bureaucratic streamlining would be the better path to cutting electricity costs.

Powers, a professional engineer, has noted that a consultant hired by the city found billions would be saved by shifting to not-for-profit public power. But that consultant made serious errors. He vastly understated the billions to be saved by getting profit out of the electric utility business.

Powers got access to the consultant's underlying data and "models" after filing a successful lawsuit against the city under the Public Records Act. Using the consultant's model, corrected for the errors, Powers and Mark Hughes, also an engineer and PPSD board member, found that city residents might save over \$100 billion in coming decades with a shift to public power.

SDGE currently earns about \$1 million in profit each day from its operations within the City of San Diego. Throughout its territory, which includes San Diego County and some adjacent areas, the local utility reported profits last year of greater than \$900 million.

"Know how much in profits a not-for-profit utility would earn?" Powers asked attendees at the Voice of San Diego event.

"Zero."

Powers also noted the vast disparity in executive pay at not-for-profit public utilities compared with for-profit companies.

The chief executive of Sacramento's Municipal Utility District, which is roughly the size of SDGE in San Diego, earns about \$1 million annually. The chief executive of SDGE earns, in contrast, earns more than \$10 million annually.

Support for the **Public Power San Diego** campaign comes from utility customers, union supporters and energy experts, as well as environmental and community groups.

PPSD encourages utility customers in the city to visit its [website](#) and learn how to build the movement to bring lower rates and clean, renewable power to San Diego.