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## California wants one million solar homes

**NOTE FROM CHAIR OF ARIZONA SOLAR CENTER:** "The Governor and Legislature of Arizona should take heed. If a State in California's financial condition and its conservative Governor can see the inherent value of solar and renewables and are acting on it, how can Arizona leadership ignore our most abundant resource?"

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### **SACRAMENTO, California, US, 2004-08-25 (Refocus Weekly) The governor of California wants one million homes to install solar panels within the next 13 years.**

In his State of the State address in January, Arnold Schwarzenegger promised to encourage the use of solar power and his new 'Million Homes Plan' is designed to encourage installation of PV systems on one million new and existing homes. Legislation to establish the plan will require new home builders to offer solar panels as an option for new homes by 2008 and, prior to purchasing a new home, buyers will be presented with an estimate of the costs and savings that come with installing a residential PV system.

"This proposal is about smart, innovative and environmentally-friendly technologies that will help improve the state's ability to meet peak electricity demand while cutting energy costs for homeowners for years to come," says Schwarzenegger. "Once implemented, it will establish California as a world leader in solar technology."

When fully implemented, the program will save 2,700 MW of peaking power and offset CO2 emissions by 50 megatonne.

The plan will direct the California Energy Commission to offer a rebate for the PV panels and finance a solar system as part of a mortgage. The option will be mandatory in subdivisions of 25 homes or more, starting in 2008.

In addition, the Public Utilities Commission will develop time-of-use pricing plans to allow excess electricity to be sold back to the grid, with customers of both investor-owned and municipal utilities eligible to participate. There would be additional incentives for solar systems on affordable housing.

The CEC will review the program in 2007 to determine if the state will reach the goal of one million homes by 2017 and, if additional funds are needed,

the PUC may raise the Public Goods charge by an amount not to exceed 0.05¢ per kWh.

Funding will come from several existing sources. An initial US\$200 million was approved previously by the legislature for renewable technologies and will be dedicated to this program. Another \$30 million will come from the existing Public Goods Charge established in January 2001.

The legislation to implement the solar plan is being sponsored by Senator Kevin Murray as Senate Bill 199. California's energy plans has a target of 20% from green power by 2017.

Environment California says it opposes the plan to use \$200 million of dedicated funds for the solar initiative, urging him to create new incentives for solar homes "without gutting existing programs" for other worthwhile renewable technologies such as solar thermal.