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July 21, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
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Sen. Richard C. Shelby, Ranking Member
Senate Banking Committee

The Honorable Jeffrey Bingaman, Chair
Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Energy & Natural Resources

U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of Congress:

North Bay Leadership Council's members, representing over 20,000 employees, are constituents of the North Bay's First and Sixth Congressional Districts; we ask you to support legislation that guarantees local government the right to establish clean energy programs, known as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE). PACE is a local government solution that helps home and building owners finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements and is supported by a century of legal and historical precedent for special assessment districts, including more than **37,000** districts that have been used to finance sewers, sidewalks, and other projects that serve a public purpose.

We strongly believe that recent actions by federal regulators infringe upon state's rights to utilize assessment districts and that PACE is good for our nation's housing industry and mortgage investors. The regulators disagree. We must protect our state's rights and let the facts and data from our nation's PACE pilot programs determine who is correct. We urge you to support legislation so our nation's PACE pilot programs can proceed.

In just the past two years, twenty-two states have passed laws enabling local governments to develop PACE programs (**CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, LA, ME, MD, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, TX, VT, VA, WI**). State and local governments have embraced PACE because of its tremendous potential to cut energy bills, increase homeowner cash flow for mortgage payments, reduce mortgage default risk, create tens of thousands of local jobs and dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by spurring investment in clean energy improvements. PACE has received strong bipartisan support nationwide – in red states and blue states – because creating jobs, saving energy and reducing utility bills for families and businesses is important to all Americans. Our nation's PACE programs were set to launch a 24 month pilot period this summer, funded by \$150 million in grants from the Department of Energy, incorporating safety and soundness consumer and lender protections that were developed by a White House led inter-agency working group consisting of HUD, NEC, OMB, CEQ and DOE.