

You Can't Spell Sustainability Without Albany
June Topic: Solar Power

Have you wondered when the price of solar electric panels will drop to the point where they are as cheap as paying your PG&E bill? Well, wait no longer. A number of companies will now install solar panels on your roof with no money down, and then enter into a contract to sell you the solar power at the same cost as PG&E's power. So you get solar power at a low cost by leasing your roof space and buying the power generated at your home. These "[solar services](#)" companies include [Solar City](#), [Sungevity](#), [SunRun](#) and others. Or you might try [One Block Off the Grid](#) – the Groupon of solar electric systems.

Curious about how to get started? Northern California Solar Energy Association's [How to Buy](#) website covers the basic information you need to know when contacting solar installers. Another great local non-profit resource is [Smart Solar](#), a program that offers free independent advice and a free solar assessment. As someone who has gone through the process, I'd recommend getting a few bids to compare. I'd also recommend that you do it now – you've waited long enough to solar power your home!

Don't own your home but still want some solar electrons? Perhaps you'll enjoy a solar-powered device like a solar cell phone charger. Great for on-the-go when you don't have access to an outlet, or for reducing your use of grid power.

There are many reasons why people love solar. Solar power is an infinite renewable resource. It peaks its power production when California has highest demand for electricity, making it a great fit for reducing the need for new power plants. It has no moving parts, so it's low maintenance and reliable. And, of course, it is an emissions-free power source.

There are a number of environmentally-related activities going on in June. Mark your calendar:

June 5 – [World Environment Day](#).

June 12 - EcoHouse Tour plus Clinic: [Solar Energy for All Incomes](#) sponsored by Ecology Center.

June 18 - [National Clean Energy Day](#).

June 21 - Summer Solstice – the longest day of the year. Hello summer!

OK. Enough reading. Now go make your home solar powered!

Dan Lieberman's monthly column for Albany Patch is written on behalf of the City of Albany's [Sustainability Committee](#). The column is intended to provide information and resources for local residents and businesses to improve their impacts on the environment in a cost-effective manner.