

Will You Keep Your New Year's Environmental Resolutions?

It's already mid January. How are you doing on your New Year's resolutions? I'm so bad, I'm eating candy as I write this. And it's not a reward for a workout today. My only exercise today was biking to Sunny Side Café for lunch, and I'm sure that was a huge caloric net gain! But I digress.

The new year is a time to reflect on our personal behaviors (and their modification), and set our goals for the year. When it comes to the environment, I have a few this year.

- **Reduce my dietary footprint.** This is a somewhat selfish objective, because I found out last year that I have high cholesterol. Cutting down on meat intake will benefit the environment and my health. I kicked things off by cooking with dried beans for the first time. It's remarkably easy, cost-effective, delicious, and easier on the planet meat. I'm striving to do more home-cooked vegetarian meals this year.
- **Increase my bike commuting.** This shouldn't be difficult to achieve, because my office moved to downtown SF (previously in the Presidio), making BART an obvious and convenient mode of transportation. Getting to BART by bike is a no brainer. The more challenging element will be biking in bad weather. I keep reminding myself that I'm not made of sugar (and won't dissolve in the rain) but I'm also simultaneously eating too much candy...
- **Recycle all of that stuff I'm hoarding.** All of those batteries I've used over the past two years, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs that finally gave out, and cans of household hazardous waste (icky chemical cleaners, half-full cans of paint that I'll never use, etc.). They're stored in a bin near the washer-dryer, begging to be taken to a final resting place. The City's new contract with Waste Management means residential curbside collection of household batteries and cellular phones (place batteries in a heavy duty sealed plastic bag on top of the recycling container, ditto for cell phones). Waste Management will also be proving curbside collection of CFL bulbs within the next few months. So it really couldn't be any easier.

Last year my resolution was to insulate our home and make it more energy efficient and comfortable. I'm not reaping those benefits, and it feels great. If you want more information on how to make your home more energy efficient, please attend the [Albany Home Energy Forum](#) on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the Albany Senior Center (846 Masonic Ave). The event flier has "Surprising Facts About Your Home Energy Use" that might provide motivation to attend:

Did you know?

- You may be eligible for up to \$4,000 in rebates from PG&E when you make your home more energy efficient.
- The average home loses approximately 40% of its energy through leaks
- The average home creates more air pollution than the average car

We hope to see you there, and hope you achieve your environmental goals this year!