

Interview with California Assembly Member Jared Huffman conducted December 22, 2008.

On December 22, 2008 I had the opportunity to interview Assembly Member Jared Huffman, sponsor of AB 1920. As discussed on the California Green Building Blog ([CLICK HERE](#)), AB 1920 is a great piece of legislation that provides added incentives to homeowners who install photovoltaic systems. Although distilled from its original incarnation, AB 1920 still provides common-sense incentives for alternative power generation.

My recorder was not working for the interview, so the following excerpts are records of my notes from the conversation.

California Green Building Blog (CGBB): Could you please tell us the status of AB 1920?

Assembly Member Jared Huffman (AM Huffman): AB 1920 died at the end of this year's legislative session. Basically there is a lot of horsetrading at the end of the session. It's a hostage and release situation. There are a number of bills from each side. One side will bring some bills to the floor for a vote in exchange for other bills to be brought up. AB 1920 was part of a big package of bills that made it to the floor, but it was a hostage bill held up by the senate. It was ready for a vote, and had the votes to pass, but literally, the clock ran out.

CGBB: Will this make it easier for AB 1920 to get through next year?

AM Huffman: Yes, AB 1920 should not have a problem getting passed next year.

CGBB: Will California's budget crisis have any impact on AB 1920?

AM Huffman: No, there is no General Fund impact. The cost comes from the utilities that are required to buy energy credits.

CGBB: Originally, AB 1920 provided a retail rate payment to home energy producers for their surplus energy. Is that still the case?

AM Huffman: No, one of the concessions is that consumers will now get a wholesale rate of reimbursement for their surplus energy. Consumers still get a retail rate credit against their energy bill for the energy they use. The utility is

forced to take the energy credit at a retail rate

CGBB: There was also a provision in the original bill that allowed residential energy producers to build large photovoltaic systems above the load they use. Is that still in the bill?

AM Huffman: That's the size to load provision, and that had to be a compromise too. On the senate side, they lifted size to load limit. Currently, a resident has to align their solar installation to PUC's current size to load system. With AB 1920 you can size to meet current and projected demand. Currently we don't have a "projected" element, so at least now [with AB 1920] we have projected elements as well as current measurements.

AB 1920 encourages conservation. For any size system you need to continue to be efficient. You're not going to waste energy, because now you get paid for the surplus.

CGBB: There are companies out there such as Solar City that are essentially "lease-back" arrangements. Does AB 1920 have any effect on these companies or arrangements?

AM Huffman: These are PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements) and the legislation will not affect these companies in any way. As far as PPAs are concerned, it may end up making these systems even more profitable.

CGBB: Is there any opposition to AB 1920?

PG&E is the only opposition. SC Ed and Sempra (SDG&E) support it. I can't really understand why PG&E opposes the measure. The rate the utilities pay for the energy is a wholesale rate.

CGBB: Is there anything not in the bill that you would like to see in the there?

AM Huffman: Of course I'd like to see the bill go farther. There are a few items that were in the original bill that had to be taken out. I am particularly disappointed that the size to load restriction still exists. I would also like to offer a better wholesale rate of compensation from the utilities.

CGBB: Is there any thing else to to the bill?

AM Huffman: No, that's it. It's pretty straight forward. The bill provides money for energy fed into the grid, and takes nothing from the General Fund.

CGBB: Thanks very much for your time.

AM Huffman: Sure, my pleasure. Thank you.