

## Growing 'green' is a good thing

***Our view: Cities should join San Bernardino County with environmentally friendly initiatives.***

We join San Bernardino County Supervisors Chairman Paul Biane in asking local cities to follow the county's lead on going "green."

Supervisors on Tuesday approved four so-called "Green County San Bernardino" initiatives that will encourage more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly development.

For homeowners and business owners, the good news is that the county will waive building permit fees for those who install solar panels, wind turbines, tankless water heaters and highly energy-efficient heating/air-conditioning systems. In our sunny climate, solar panels really make sense.

For housing developers, the county will create a voluntary green building incentive program that gives priority planning review to those builders who meet [California Green Builder](#) standards for energy- and water-efficient homes.

For itself, county government will require new county buildings and major renovations of existing ones to comply with the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver standards. The county-supported library projects in Fontana and Highland are being built to LEED standards.

The county also plans to create a Web site, [www.greencountysb.gov](http://www.greencountysb.gov), to provide the public with information about going green and access to county programs.

The residential builder program in particular could have a major impact in the fast-growing county. [California Green Builder](#) certification, a voluntary program developed by builders, requires that a home be at least 15 percent more energy efficient than required and save at least 20,000 gallons of water a year compared with a typical home.

Victory Homes' Cypress Mojave is the only [Green Builder](#)-certified development in the county so far. Kern and Sacramento counties each have eight such developments.

In June, Riverside became the first city in California to offer incentives for developers who build to [Green Builder](#) standards.

Biane is asking that cities in San Bernardino County follow the county's and Riverside's lead in offering incentives to builders, homeowners and business owners to go green.

"We are trying to lead on these issues, but we can't do it without the help of our cities," Biane said before supervisors approved the new program Tuesday. "You have to do a lot of little things to have a lot of impact."

Much of the land in the county is incorporated, of course, so it's up to the many cities to get on the green bandwagon. It's an opportunity to save energy, reduce the threat of summer blackouts and keep the air cleaner. If enough energy is saved, it could even help reduce the price of energy.

Of course, there are many other ways to work toward the same goals, such as attracting jobs to the Inland Empire to reduce the need for commuting. Every bit helps, so we congratulate the county on this initiative.