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Defeat of PG&E Power Grab a Victory for Clean Energy and Democracy

Sacramento, CA – Election returns show Proposition 16 losing, despite PG&E's spending some \$46 million to pass it, outspending the opposition by more than 500 to 1.

Statement of Bill Magavern, Director of Sierra Club California

Californians sent a message yesterday that our constitution is not for sale to greedy corporations. The defeat of PG&E's naked power grab is a victory for democracy and clean energy. Despite the utility's ubiquitous deceptive advertising, voters saw through the lies and rejected the brazen effort to protect PG&E from competition. PG&E's own customers in Northern California and the Central Valley, who know the utility best, rejected the power grab resoundingly.

Sierra Club California joined our allies in the consumer and environmental movements in opposing Prop 16 because it would have thrown a huge obstacle into the path of affordable clean energy. The anti-democratic two-thirds requirement in the initiative was designed to prevent communities from choosing greener electricity than they are getting from their monopoly utilities.

Community Choice is a right— under state law— that allows local governments to contract for electric power, and make this service available to all local utility customers. There is a compelling public interest to make it as easy as possible for communities to promote clean energy, reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases, and increase local and consumer control over energy decisions.

The defeat of Prop 16 by a feisty band of under-funded public-interest groups sets a tremendous precedent for the November ballot, when oil companies and the Chamber of Commerce will be trying to pass a Polluter Protection Act to get polluters off the hook for cleaning up the damage they cause, again by seeking to enact an anti-democratic two-thirds vote requirement.