

MEMORANDUM

TO: PACE Supporters
FROM: PACE NOW Coalition
RE: Media Outreach to Support pro-PACE Legislation
DATE: July 14, 2010

Fannie and Freddie's shutdown of PACE has been covered extensively in national media in recent weeks. This is a clear infringement upon state's rights. We now need members of Congress to understand that this issue is important to their constituents, and ongoing local media coverage about PACE will be essential to that effort. We encourage you to help keep this issue in your local news until a resolution to this conflict is realized. Suggested media outreach tactics are outlined here.

Suggested Media Outreach Tactics

Four types of media outreach are most likely to reap coverage about the need to restore access to PACE in your community:

1. **Opinion-Editorials.** Op-eds offer an outstanding opportunity for presenting a pro-PACE perspective. Consider submitting an op-ed to your local paper signed by a prominent and knowledgeable local leader, such as an elected official or a contractor who saw the benefits that PACE had on his or her business. See below for suggested message points.
2. **Organize a Letters to the Editor Campaign.** This tactic offers the opportunity to demonstrate to your Representative or Senator that concerns about the PACE issue are widespread, particularly if you are able to coordinate the appearance of several letters. Consider distributing several sample letters to the editor and urging local supporters to submit letters to your local paper in their own words. See below for a sample letter.
3. **Keep local reporters informed.** Check in regularly with local reporters who have covered PACE, renewable energy or energy efficiency in the past. For example, send a press release to announce that your local city council or county board of supervisors passes a resolution in support of PACE. Urge them to cover the Fannie and Freddie story if they have not yet done so, pointing to the opportunities that have been lost in your community.
4. **Reach out to your local editorial board.** If your local daily and/or weekly papers have shown a general support of PACE and have not yet editorialized against Fannie and Freddie's actions, reach out to the editorial board(s) there and urge them to call for a quick resolution to these issues.

Suggested Messages

While it is important to know your local media market, there are certain messages that are likely to resonate everywhere. We recommend you focus on the messages outlined here and augment them with additional local data and experiences as you reach out to the media.

- **The Federal government has infringed upon state's rights and shouldn't stifle a tremendous local innovation: PACE.** PACE is an innovative local government solution that allows homeowners to voluntarily agree to a special property tax increase as a means of financing renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements. Assessing local property taxes is the province of local government. The Federal government – and its mortgage lending giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – shouldn't trample on the rights of local government by stopping PACE. There are 37,000 special assessment districts that have been used to finance sewers, sidewalks, business improvement districts, yet federal regulators have singled out PACE and announced that clean energy assessment districts should not be permitted. In addition, to violating state's rights, this action impedes our nation's efforts toward fossil fuel independence.
- **PACE stimulates green job growth.** With these new restrictions in place from Fannie and Freddie, jobs are being lost, when they could be – and had been – gained thanks to PACE. Energy efficiency and independence are both national priorities, and PACE creates a strong local tool for supporting those important goals.
- **We urge Congress to fix this problem now.** Through the Department of Energy, the Obama Administration in April put \$150 million into the development of local PACE programs. Now Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have thrown a wrench into the works and stopped PACE across the country. Congress, which chartered Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, needs to step in to resolve this problem. Congress must pass legislation that clearly guarantees local government the right to assess special taxes for clean energy programs.
- **PACE is a voluntary property tax assessment – not a loan.** Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are wrong to call PACE financings “loans.” A loan is made to an individual, who is responsible to pay it back. A tax assessment is made on a property. If an owner installs solar panels and sells the house three years later, the *new* owner will assume payments of the property tax assessment – and they will also get the benefit of lower utility bills. If that same homeowner were to get a loan to install solar panels and then moved after three years, the *original* homeowner would be responsible for repayment of the loan.

Your Support is Essential

Thank you in advance for continuing to support a coordinated effort to find a timely resolution to this ongoing conflict with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. If Congress acts quickly, the tremendous promise of PACE will still be realized.

Save PACE: Sample Letter to the Editor

Full permission is granted for the broad distribution and republication of this letter in its entirety or portions thereof.

To the Editor:

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is an innovative program that holds tremendous opportunity for our community. PACE allows property owners to make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements and to pay for the cost over time through their property taxes. It's a voluntary program that creates local green jobs and reduces energy use.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac recently declared that such programs violate the terms of the mortgages owned by these companies, which are by far the vast majority of American mortgages. Their actions have shut down PACE here and throughout the country. Assessing local property taxes is the province of local government. The Federal government – and its mortgage lending giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – shouldn't trample on the rights of local government by stopping PACE. There are 37,000 special assessment districts that have been used to finance sewers, sidewalks, business improvement districts, yet federal regulators have singled out PACE and announced that clean energy assessment districts should not be permitted. In addition, to violating state's rights, this action impedes our nation's efforts toward fossil fuel independence.

As our voice in Congress, Rep. _____ [or Senator _____] should stand up for PACE and resolve this dispute with Fannie and Freddie once and for all. Between our weak economy and the oil spill in the Gulf, now is not the time to turn our backs on this promising program.

Sincerely,