

## DOCKETED

<b>Docket Number:</b>	09-AFC-07C
<b>Project Title:</b>	Palen Solar Power Project - Compliance
<b>TN #:</b>	202737
<b>Document Title:</b>	Ex.1192 - Governor Brown Climate Change Article
<b>Description:</b>	N/A
<b>Filer:</b>	Marie Fleming
<b>Organization:</b>	Galati   Blek LLP
<b>Submitter Role:</b>	Applicant Representative
<b>Submission Date:</b>	7/18/2014 12:57:57 PM
<b>Docketed Date:</b>	7/18/2014

<http://blog.sfgate.com/energy/2014/07/07/jerry-brown-on-clean-energy-the-hard-part-is-yet-to-come/>

# Jerry Brown on clean energy: the hard part is yet to come

Posted on Monday, July 7 at 7:03pm | By [David R. Baker](#)

Despite all its efforts to curb carbon emissions and boost renewable energy, California has just begun its shift to a sustainable economy, Gov. Jerry Brown told a solar industry convention Monday.



Photo: The Chronicle

And he warned industry delegates not to get complacent. Even if their sales are soaring, in California and elsewhere, the effort to fight climate change has just begun.

"To the extent we're getting things done, that's something to celebrate and congratulate," Brown said, speaking in San Francisco at Intersolar North America, the industry's largest annual conference in the United States. "But I would just say, it's daunting. This is a real Mt. Everest to climb. And we haven't made the turn yet to sustainability. So let us take renewed excitement and commitment from how far we've gotten. But let's not kid ourselves: we have a much harder, much taller, much more formidable challenge ahead of us."

Brown has made climate change a signature issue during his second stint as California's governor. And on Monday he ticked off a list of the steps the state has taken to limit global warming, launching a cap-and-trade system, tightening energy-efficiency standards for buildings and appliances and offering rebates for electric cars. He even touted California's planned high-speed rail system, despite waning public support for the project. (He didn't mention his support for fracking, as a handful of protestors outside urged him to ban the controversial oil and gas production technique.)

Brown also noted how far solar power had come since he first occupied the governor's office, from 1975 to 1983.

"At that time, photovoltaics were really something for the space program and not for the rooftop," he said. "But in the decades that have come after, it is just amazing how the industry

has advanced, how ordinary citizens have really picked up the torch or renewable energy, of sustainability.”

He warned that the hard work of transitioning the world’s 8th largest economy to a sustainable footing mostly lies ahead. He did not, however, propose any new goals for increasing the use of renewable power beyond the state’s current target of 33 percent by the end of 2020, although he emphasized that 33 percent would not be a limit.

“So don’t worry — there’s plenty of solar to install over the next several years,” Brown said. “It’s not about a limit.”

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