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**Going Green in Lafayette just got more competitive**

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A big point-winner (2,740 impact points) is choosing green electricity, perhaps adding solar panels or switching appliances and heating sources from gas to electric.

The Cleaner Contra Costa website offers a full menu of other actions to explore. Under Energy Smart, line drying clothes, installing insulating drapes, pivoting to smart thermostats and lighting are immediate ideas to implement. Replacing single-pane windows with double-windows, insulating walls and attics, and getting rid of that extra freezer that sits empty for most of the year while needlessly drawing energy from the grid are likely to

have a larger impact. Shifting Your Ride could mean buying or leasing a hybrid or electric vehicle, but also taking BART, reducing air travel, telecommuting when possible and walking, biking, carpooling, and if you must drive, keeping a keen eye on your speed.

Most people in California need few reminders that water is precious, even during years when the drought is less immediately apparent. Which means that taking shorter showers and replacing grass with vegetation suitable for dry climates and installing low flow plumbing in bathrooms are no-brainers. Even so, there are fresh ideas: installing weather based irrigation controls, catching rain-

fall, installing greywater systems, and other water-wise actions on the website.

A fascinating Eat Green and Waste Less page outlines foods with lower impact and suggestions about ways to reuse, share, store, recycle or go without items to reach your goals to reduce food and other waste.

With everything to gain – and only carbon emissions and planet-destroying habits to lose – there's good reason for everyone in Lafayette to join the challenge. If altruism and humanitarianism aren't enough, there's always that (secret and not-so-secret) urge to one-up the neighbors. Isn't it remarkable that in this challenge, even the "losers" win?

For information, visit [www.cleanercontracosta.org](http://www.cleanercontracosta.org)

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