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Aquarium Uses Solar Panels to Shrink Its Carbon Footprint *Demonstration Project a Partnership with City Light, Puget Sound Energy*

SEATTLE – The Seattle Aquarium unveiled Seattle’s first solar hot water demonstration project today, a system that will reduce the aquarium’s use of natural gas by preheating water used in the second floor café.

Installed with financial support from Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy, the five solar panels will shrink the aquarium’s carbon footprint by 2.5 tons of CO2 each year, and teach the aquarium’s 800,000 visitors about renewable energy sources.

“Sustainable energy is linked to sustainable oceans,” Aquarium Director John Braden said.

“Over 200 years of increasing CO2 emissions have carbonated the oceans and increased its acidity, threatening marine food webs, including plankton, shellfish, fish, birds, mammals and humans,” he said. “With this solar project, we hope to provide a model of sustainability that can inspire our visitors and other zoos and aquariums to do what they can to take Climate Action Now.”

The solar hot water system cost about \$28,000 to install. City Light and Puget Sound Energy each paid \$11,630 with the Aquarium society contributing \$2,000 and the Aquarium paying \$3,000.

“As a utility, we know that smart energy choices are a vital part of taking care of Puget Sound waters,” said Kimberly Harris, executive vice president and chief resource officer for PSE. “This solar hot water heating project demonstrates how new energy technologies can help preserve our region’s marine life.”

This is the first solar hot water demonstration project in Seattle. Both utilities have installed numerous solar electric power systems in homes and schools in their service territories. PSE is also using a solar hot water system at its Skagit Service Center in Burlington.

“Seattle might be known as Rain City, but solar works in Seattle,” Seattle City Light Conservation Director Bob Balzar said. “This public-private partnership shows how renewable energy can help us meet our everyday needs while reducing our impact on the planet.”

Signage at the aquarium will provide visitors with information about the project and how solar and other renewable energy could be used in their homes. An interactive display providing real-time data about the system’s performance is planned. City Light and Puget Sound Energy offer a variety of incentives for residents and businesses to install solar equipment and energy-saving features. For more information, please see www.pse.com and www.seattle.gov/light.

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