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State Energy Commission Commends Cal Poly Solar Decathlon Team

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The California Energy Commission has honored Cal Poly's Solar Decathlon Team for its commitment to energy conservation and sustainable building.

Meeting Jan. 18 in Sacramento, the commission issued a resolution commending the Solar Cal Poly team for representing California and "brilliantly" competing against 17 universities from the United States, Canada and Europe at last fall's Solar Decathlon in Washington, D.C. Cal Poly finished third in the international contest to design, build and operate a livable and energy-efficient solar-powered home.

In its commendation, the commission recognized the team's "enthusiasm, energy and expertise in meeting their goal to publicly demonstrate and share their knowledge of sustainable building design and commitment to ensuring California's energy future."

The commission also acknowledged the Cal Poly team for incorporating "the energy efficiency philosophy and appropriate use of renewable technology of the Green Building Initiative and the Governor's Executive Order S 20-04 into their winning energy-efficient design."

Of the contest's 10 categories, Cal Poly earned first place for energy-efficient appliances and lighting and second place for architecture, dwelling and comfort designs.

Recognition of Cal Poly's success in this international competition comes on the heels of the newly created California Solar Initiative, the largest solar program in the country, aimed at increasing the amount of installed solar capacity on rooftops in the state by 3,000 megawatts by 2017.

One component of this program will be to encourage solar installations in the residential new construction market. Cal Poly's solar home will be used to educate builders in solar heating and solar electric technologies.

While California has long been a leader in renewable energy research and development, Cal Poly is the only team from a California university to ever compete in the Solar Decathlon. Cal Poly has been awarded a \$100,000 grant to participate in the 2007 Solar Decathlon.

"We believe the Solar Decathlon provides a compelling, hands-on educational experience for students from across the Cal Poly campus, as well as an opportunity to help move the state towards more environmentally sustainable housing alternatives," said Rob Peña, a Cal Poly architecture professor and one of the project advisors.

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