

Since 1998, the Aquarium of the Pacific has established itself as a leader, educating the community about ocean conservation principles and practices. Adherence to energy conservancy policies of the Aquarium, city, region, and state is made difficult by the demand for visitor comfort, animal safety and world-class exhibits.

The Aquarium is the first museum in the United States to certify its greenhouse gas emissions with any registry, successfully becoming a Climate Action Leader™ with the Climate Action Registry. Efficient lighting systems, co-generation insulating life support systems, high efficiency pool pumps, and leading edge operating procedures have been installed to comply with ongoing energy initiatives.

Base line resource utilization was measured and set at the Aquarium in 2002, and there has been no net increase of kwh usage since then. During that same time, attendance has grown steadily at about 5% each year, and several programs, including a large shark tank, have been added. This growth has *not* escalated power usage despite increases in energy-intensive animal life support systems. Electrical usage will remain at 6.2 million kwh annually; estimates are that, without existing policies, consumption would be close to 10 million kwh. This flattening of energy consumption is atypical for aquariums, where historic industry practices have precluded energy efficiencies. The Aquarium of the Pacific prides itself on inventive and insightful planning that has kept energy consumption in its building complex strategically minimized.

Using energy conservation efforts as a springboard to meeting capacity demands, the Aquarium has embarked upon a major expansion effort to further enlighten the public regarding sustainable activities and strengthen its conservation message. As a first step, the Aquarium will inaugurate a new environmental classroom in November of 2008, which will be the first LEED platinum certified building in the city. It will use solar power, a green roof, a rainwater capture system, and many other features that will show the public ways to create their own energy and water efficiencies.

The Aquarium is committed to achieving LEED platinum or gold certification for all future projects, raising “green technology” awareness, and continuing to invest in sustainable practices. Additionally, its Green Team advises management on policy, while organizing street and beach clean ups, and Earth Day festivals. By demonstrating resource management concepts to the public (such as reducing their carbon footprint), and inspiring visitors and community leaders to find viable solutions to current environmental issues, the Aquarium will spark discussion and action to effect energy efficiencies in daily life.

Innovative capacity planning will further assist the Aquarium in serving its current 1.4 million annual visitors while putting green solutions into practice, such as waterless urinals and dual flush toilets for this high-traffic attraction. The Aquarium’s conservation efforts are certain to serve as a model for energy-conscious activity for many years to come.