



**To: City Captains of National Plug In Day Events**  
**From: Gina Coplon-Newfield, Electric Vehicles Campaign, Sierra Club**  
**Date: August 19, 2013**  
**Re: Opportunities & Guidelines on National Plug In Day Corporate Partnerships & Sponsorships**

**Introduction:**

The third annual National Plug In Day will take place on September 28-29, 2013 and is an exciting opportunity to raise awareness about the many environmental, economic, and national security benefits associated with a switch to electric vehicles. We are working to organize Plug In Day events this year in more than 75 cities where we will promote EVs to the media, policymakers, and the public. Sierra Club, Plug In America, and the Electric Auto Association serve as the national team overseeing and providing support to the many events nationwide. We are also pleased to partner with other local groups and individuals helping to put on the local Plug In Day events.

**We recognize that there are many companies doing essential work to advance the EV sector. Even without being the lead event organizers, companies can play a key role in participating in and promoting Plug In Day events.**

The Sierra Club has certain guidelines in regards to corporate partnerships and sponsorships that are consistent with the organization's long history of independence and advocacy on environmental issues and that aim to satisfy a very large and active membership. We know that Sierra Club's corporate sponsorship/partnership guidelines are more restrictive than those of Plug In America and the Electric Auto Association. Because this is a joint partnership in which the most restrictive guidelines will often set the bar, we wanted to clarify the Sierra Club's guidelines in this memo to all Plug In Day city captains. Please note though that we understand that both Plug In America and the Electric Auto Association likely will create opportunities for corporate support of National Plug In Day that will be consistent with this framework and their respective organizational policies. We encourage you to reach out to them directly if you would like to learn more about their efforts. This memo is an updated version of last year's memo.

**Who Can Be City Captain**

Sierra Club, Electric Auto Association, and Plug In America have determined that each local event will be organized by representatives of nonprofit organizations or municipalities that are interested in advancing the EV sector in a way that makes most sense for that community. Event organizers may also be individual EV advocates with strong community ties. We call each local lead organizer a "city captain."

**Companies or corporate representatives may not play the role of "city captain" by taking the lead in organizing local Plug In Day events. This city captain role needs to be played by a nonprofit group or an individual EV advocate with strong community ties. This will allow us to retain the independent, grassroots flavor that will help make Plug In Day a success. If**

**people with a company do want to play a key role in an event, we encourage them to partner with a community group that will take the lead. And see below for more specific ideas.**

### **General Suggestions for Company Involvement**

- Provide vehicles for test-drives or test-rides.
- Provide vehicles or charging units to showcase.
- Provide charging units for event participants to use to charge their vehicles.
- Provide event space at a parking lot or elsewhere.
- Promote Plug In Day by issuing a press release, sending an email or mailing to customers, and/or trumpeting Plug In Day on social media.
- Donate food or other items to help offset the costs of local events.
- Contribute funds to offset the costs of local events.
- Provide information at a booth or table at local event(s).

### **Specific Guidelines**

Please see below for “what’s okay” and “what’s not okay” in regards to corporate partnership and sponsorship of National Plug In Day efforts. We note below exceptions that may exist, especially in regards to gift acceptance. If you have any questions, please contact me at [gina.coplton-newfield@sierraclub.org](mailto:gina.coplton-newfield@sierraclub.org).

#### ***What's Okay/Encouraged:***

- Local organizers of Plug In Day events are in contact with auto dealers, EV charging unit companies, and other companies in the EV space (as well as municipalities) to discuss participation in local events. See above for specific suggestions.
- Companies may promote Plug In Day events to their customers through news releases, social media, eblasts and mailings to customers, etc.
- Local organizers of Plug In Day events may ask companies to donate food, space, or other items that will help with local Plug In Day events.
- Local organizers of Plug In Day events may ask companies for funding to offset costs of local events. However, if a Sierra Club chapter is the one soliciting the funds, see below for "what's not okay."
- Local organizers may include the names of sponsoring or partnering companies on their promotional materials (except for the company logos on news releases). However, if it is the name of an auto company that manufactures EVs and gas-powered vehicles, any reference to that company in event promotional materials must be in conjunction with the name of the electric vehicle (not just the automaker name). For example, "The Nissan Leaf" is fine (but not just "Nissan").
- Local organizers may include the names of these companies on their local press releases in the form of quotes and factual info (like "General Motors participated in the event by providing test-rides of its Chevy Volts...").
- Sierra Club, Plug In America, or Electric Auto Association may ask national companies (like automakers, EV charging unit companies, etc) to participate in National Plug In Day by connecting with local event organizers, providing a quote for our national news release, promoting the events to their customers and dealerships, etc.
- For events being organized by Sierra Club chapters, staff, or volunteers: A company may give less than \$1,000 to a Sierra Club chapter to sponsor and offset the costs of the local event. Any gifts larger than this amount must be cleared by the Sierra Club Business Partnership Committee. Even gifts less than \$1,000 are not allowed from automakers that

manufacturer gas-powered vehicles or from utilities. Before accepting any corporate donations or sponsorships on behalf of a Sierra Club chapter, please visit the Gift Acceptance and Business Partnership guidelines at:

<http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/administration/policies/finance/default.aspx>.

- Plug In America, Electric Auto Association, or other groups or individuals organizing local Plug In Day events may decide in conjunction with corporations that larger corporate gifts are appropriate for support of local events. If you are a city captain affiliated with another organization besides Sierra Club, you are encouraged to contact the leadership of that organization if you have a question about gift acceptance.

***What's Not Okay:***

- Companies may not contribute money to national Sierra Club to sponsor the effort.
- Corporate logos may not be included in national news releases or other materials about the national effort –only logos of Sierra Club, Plug In America, and Electric Auto Association may be included.
- If the Sierra Club logo is included in local promotional materials, corporate logos may not be included in the local Plug In Day press release, banners, flyers, and web materials about the local event.
- The name of a company that manufactures any gasoline-powered vehicles may not appear on any local event or national Plug In Day promotional materials without reference to the company's electric vehicle product. For example, reference to “Nissan Leaf” is fine, but not simply “Nissan.” If a company manufactures EVs only (and no gas-powered vehicles), the name of the company may appear in promotional materials without reference to specific vehicles.
- Any gifts larger than \$1,000 are not allowed to be received by Sierra Club chapters unless they are first cleared by the Sierra Club Business Partnership Committee. Even gifts less than \$1,000 are not allowed from automakers that manufacture gas-powered vehicles or from utilities. Before accepting any corporate donations or sponsorships on behalf of a Sierra Club chapter, please visit the Gift Acceptance and Business Partnership guidelines at: <http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/administration/policies/finance/default.aspx>.