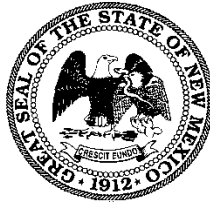


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Mexico to Participate in Federal Program to Connect More Households to Solar Energy, Lower Electricity Bills

SANTA FE—New Mexico is one of five states and the District of Columbia that have signed up to pilot the Community Solar Subscription Platform to connect more households to solar energy and lower electricity bills through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other assistance programs, according to a joint announcement yesterday by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The DOE said it has prioritized working with states such as New Mexico that have set up programs supporting low-income community solar development.

Last year, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed into law the Community Solar Act, which called on the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) to draft and approve the rules of the state's community solar program. Still under development, the community solar program allows for the establishment of community solar facilities to provide qualifying utility customers the option of accessing energy produced by the facility. The PRC is in the process of contracting with a third-party project administrator to oversee the program.

The PRC's Community Solar Rule, which went into effect earlier this month, includes a statewide capacity of 200 megawatts of community solar power as well as selection policies for utility companies issuing opportunities for community solar development in New Mexico, requiring that at least 30% of each project serve low-income subscribers and service organizations. Consumer protections are also established for community

solar subscribers. More information about community solar can be found at <https://www.nm-prc.org/utilities/community-solar/>

The Community Solar Subscription Platform is designed to connect community solar projects with verified cost savings to households participating in government-run assistance programs such as LIHEAP, which in New Mexico is administered by the Human Services Department. Connecting LIHEAP-eligible customers with low-income-focused community solar subscriptions through this platform is expected to reduce the cost of customer acquisition, reduce low-income household energy bills on a regular basis, and increase the deployment of community solar projects that include low-income customers. The DOE estimates that New Mexico families will see a combined electric bill savings of up to \$30 million annually.

Additionally, the DOE Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) – in partnership with HHS, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, National Association of State Energy Officials, and National Energy Assistance Directors Association – has issued a request for information (RFI) to understand how SETO can develop a secure online platform to make community solar subscriptions with verified savings more accessible for households participating in government-run low-income support programs. Feedback is sought from state and local governments, researchers, LIHEAP implementation organizations, organizations representing and serving environmental justice and fossil fuel-transitioning communities, groups that work with individuals and organizations with high energy burdens, and other interested parties on the following topics:

- Roles of relevant stakeholders in platform development and use
- Data security and participant privacy
- Verification of bill savings for Low- and Moderate-Income community solar subscriptions
- Integration with utility billing and/or community solar subscription services

More information about the RFI can be found online at <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/request-information-low-income-community-solar-subscription-platform>. The deadline to respond is August 31, 2022, at 3 p.m. MDT

The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) regulates the [utilities](#), [telecommunications](#), and [motor carrier](#) industries to ensure fair and reasonable rates, and to assure reasonable and adequate services to the public as provided by law.

The NMPRC also promotes public safety through the offices of [Pipeline Safety Bureau](#) and [Transportation Division](#).

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