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Clean Energy States Alliance Launches Major Initiative to Advance Solar in Under-Resourced Communities

US Department of Energy Funds CESA's Efforts to Scale Up Solar for Low-and Moderate-Income Households

Montpelier, VT – The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) will lead a wide-ranging initiative to accelerate the development of solar projects that benefit low-and-moderate-income (LMI) households and communities. The “Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities Project” is being supported by a three-year funding award of \$1.1 million from the US Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office.

The project team will focus on three distinct subsets of the LMI solar market: single-family homes, manufactured homes, and multifamily affordable housing.

For the *single-family homes* component of the initiative, CESA will work with Connecticut Green Bank, Inclusive Prosperity Capital, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and PosiGen Solar to evaluate and promote a successful initiative that has brought solar to more than 2,500 Connecticut single-family homes, most of which are LMI. State agencies from across the country will be given the opportunity to join a working group where they will receive technical assistance and other support to consider adopting similar programs for their states.

For manufactured homes, CESA, with assistance from representatives of the New Mexico Energy Conservation and Management Division, will examine the potential for using solar to power manufactured homes in different states, based on their housing stock, solar policies, geography, and the applicability of different possible technologies. State government agencies, rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, and other stakeholders will be encouraged to join a learning network to explore the potential for launching a pilot project or program for manufactured homes.

The *multifamily affordable housing* component of the project will build on work carried out by Clean Energy Group (CEG) in conjunction with the Kresge Foundation. CEG and CESA will work with housing developers/owners and community development lenders to replicate and expand loan guarantee and other foundation program-related investment (PRI) models for solar and solar+storage projects for multifamily affordable housing. Principal objectives will be to increase community resilience and reduce energy costs for low-income households.

CESA has worked actively on LMI solar more than five years. CESA Executive Director Warren Leon remarks that: “CESA is committed to helping state governments and other stakeholders implement solar in ways that provide meaningful benefits to under-resourced communities. The

new grant from the US DOE solar office will enable us to significantly expand our outreach and assistance.”

To carry out the new initiative and other work CESA is engaged in related to solar for LMI communities, two talented individuals with strong experience working on this topic have been added to the CESA staff.

CESA Project Director Nicole Hernandez Hammer is a well-known environmental justice advocate, climate change expert, and sea-level researcher. A Guatemalan immigrant, she has worked to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on under-resourced communities across the US. For the past year, she has been a consultant to the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, working primarily with community groups on LMI solar. She was a climate science and community advocate at the Union of Concerned Scientists and assistant director of the Florida Center for Environmental Studies, among other positions. She was recently recognized by NBC as one of the [#NBCLatino20](#).

Laura Schieb, CESA project associate, earned a JD at Vermont Law School, as well as an LLM in Energy Law with a Certificate in Climate Law. While at the law school, she was employed as a Global Energy Law Fellow, implementing projects at the Energy Law Clinic, including leading a team preparing a report on low-income solar ownership in Vermont.

To learn about or to sign up for updates about the new Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities Project, go to www.cesa.org/projects/low-income-clean-energy/scaling-up-lmi-solar/.

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About the Clean Energy States Alliance

The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) is a national nonprofit coalition of public agencies and organizations working together to advance clean energy. CESA members—mostly state agencies—include many of the most innovative, successful, and influential public funders of clean energy initiatives in the country. CESA facilitates information sharing, provides technical assistance, coordinates multi-state collaborative projects, and communicates the achievements of its members. For more information, visit www.cesa.org.

About the Solar Energy Technologies Office

The US Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office supports early-stage research and development to improve the affordability, reliability, and performance of solar technologies on the grid. Learn more at energy.gov/solar-office.

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