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CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR PROJECT SUNBRIDGE SOLAR FOR ALL IMPLEMENTATION

I. PURPOSE

The Connecticut Green Bank ("Green Bank") is preparing to issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for residential single-family leasing partners for solar photovoltaic ("PV") and solar PV paired with storage systems through Connecticut's federally funded Solar for All ("SFA") program, Project SunBridge (or, "Program"). **This Request for Information ("RFI") seeks input from developers, financing providers, and any other potential stakeholders in a third-party ownership ("TPO") model to finalize the scope of services and structure of the Program.** Your feedback may help shape the final design of forthcoming RFPs for a TPO financing partner and participating installers, anticipated to be issued later this summer. The Green Bank aims to develop a single-family solar lease offering to address market gaps to serve federally designated Low-Income and Disadvantage Communities ("LIDACs")[1] across Connecticut while adhering to Connecticut's federally-approved Project SunBridge workplan.

II. GREEN BANK BACKGROUND

The Green Bank was established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2011. As the nation's first green bank, it is leading the clean energy finance movement by leveraging public and private funds to scale-up renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency projects across Connecticut. The Green Bank's success in accelerating private investment in clean energy is helping Connecticut create jobs, increase economic prosperity, promote energy security and address climate change. For more information about the Green Bank, please visit www.ctgreenbank.com.

III. PROJECT SUNBRIDGE BACKGROUND

The Green Bank worked in close collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection ("DEEP"), the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority ("PURA"), the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority ("CHFA"), the Connecticut Department of Housing, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, and others, to apply for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") Solar for All program in October 2023. In 2024, EPA obligated $62.45 million in financial and technical assistance Solar for All funds to Connecticut and subsequently approved Connecticut's Project SunBridge workplan. The Green Bank is a subrecipient under DEEP's award and is responsible for deploying the financial assistance offerings along with CHFA. All funds must be deployed by August 2029.

[1] See Appendix A for a detailed definition and mapping resources.

Through Solar for All, Project SunBridge will deploy solar PV systems for residential single-family homes and multifamily affordable housing properties that meet the federal LIDAC definition. In addition, Project SunBridge allocates funds for co-installing energy storage and/or required enabling upgrades (i.e., roof repairs, electrical panel and/or necessary interconnection upgrades) for residential single-family projects. Solar for All funded projects must also demonstrate 20% household savings for participating households.

IV. INPUT REQUESTED ON SINGLE-FAMILY THIRD-PARTY OWNERSHIP MODELS

Through this RFI, the Green Bank specifically seeks input on single-family lease offering(s) for solar PV or solar PV paired with storage installations for customers in LIDACs through Project SunBridge. Approximately $6 million is allocated to support solar financing for single-family households in LIDACs who also participate in the utility-administered Residential Renewable Energy Solutions ("RRES") program. In addition, up to $3.75 million will be allocated as grants for enabling upgrades, which Project SunBridge defines as roof repairs, electrical panel and/or necessary interconnection upgrades. Qualifying single-family households in LIDACs who are interested in co-installing storage may also be eligible for additional grant funds through Project SunBridge in addition to incentives available through Connecticut's Energy Storage Solutions ("ESS") program. The Green Bank invites all interested stakeholders to respond to the prompt(s) most applicable to them.

The following questions pertain to TPO <u>financing partners</u> interested in providing input to the design of the Connecticut SFA residential single-family lease program:

1. What criteria should be included in an RFP to develop a bid for a third-party ownership single-family lease (e.g., level of specific dollar amount of financing or megawatt deployment target; financing structure/flow of funds, etc.). Provide proposed program parameters, as applicable.

2. Do you currently work with external developers/contractors in Connecticut?
    a. If so, describe the vetting process you use to determine eligibility for working with a developer or installers, including any specific requirements that must be met.

3. Connecticut's Project SunBridge program includes grants for storage systems that the Green Bank anticipates will be paired with the existing ESS program offerings. This question seeks input on whether the storage grant should be bundled into a lease or administered separately.
    a. Do you currently offer a co-installed solar PV and storage lease?
    b. If not, what are the current barriers?

4. If the Green Bank ultimately opts to prioritize a TPO that can offer a solar PV paired with storage lease, what details would you need from an RFP to price a bid (e.g., customer savings target, minimum solar and storage attachment rate, etc.)?

5. Project SunBridge seeks to optimize the use of limited grant funds to support enabling upgrades (i.e., roof and electrical upgrades) for single-family customers installing solar,

or co-installing solar and storage. Should funds for enabling upgrades be a.) provided up to a percentage of total project cost, b.) have a specific dollar maximum based on the type of upgrade, or c.) set using an alternative approach? Based on your recommended approach, what should be the limit of enabling upgrade grant funds applied per solar installation?

6. Are you currently participating in any other Solar for All-funded programs? If yes, please describe your role or involvement.

7. Describe anticipated pricing impacts for the residential single-family market in Connecticut if the federal clean energy tax credit is eliminated or otherwise phased out.

8. What is the most effective use of SFA funding to support and incentivize TPOs to pursue ownership of solar projects installed in single-family homes within LIDACs?

9. Describe your and your partners' approach to customer acquisition. What have you found to be effective? What support is needed from an organization like the Green Bank in terms of customer acquisition?

10. Provide any additional comments regarding TPO financing approaches for consideration through this Program.

The following questions pertain to solar PV and/or storage developers or installers interested in providing input into the design of the Connecticut SFA residential single-family lease program:

11. In your current practice, if residential solar PV customers require enabling upgrades (i.e., roof and/or electrical upgrades) do you perform that work in-house or work with a separate contractor? If you are not performing the work internally, how do you work with customers to find contractors to do this work?

12. Do you currently partner with TPO financing provider(s)? If so, describe your preferred financing terms or other key parameters.

13. What information would you need in an RFP to participate as an eligible installer for a single-family lease offering through this program (e.g., submitting a cost per watt based on certain criteria; level of megawatt deployment target; experience in the qualification/customer acquisition of single-family households in LIDACs etc.). Provide proposed program parameters, as applicable.

14. Describe your experience, if applicable, in either running a community-based “Solarize”[2] campaign or otherwise working with a third party to support targeted marketing and outreach campaign either in Connecticut, or in another jurisdiction.
    a. What is your interest and ability in leading in a community-based “Solarize” campaign supported by Project SunBridge? Alternatively, would you prefer that a separate entity coordinate a targeted marketing and outreach campaign that you participate in?

15. Describe anticipated pricing impacts for the residential single-family market in Connecticut if the federal clean energy tax credit is eliminated or otherwise phased out.

16. What is the most effective use of SFA funding to support and incentivize installers to pursue development of solar projects geared towards single-family homes within LIDACs?

17. What consumer protections are needed for low-to-moderate income households specifically?

18. Provide any additional comments regarding development and installation geared at single-family households in LIDACs for consideration through this Program.

V. RFI RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit your response by July 11, 2025 to rfp@ctgreenbank.com.

Should the respondent note any discrepancies, require clarifications or wish to request interpretations of any kind, please submit a written request to Stefanie Keohane, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, by email at rfp@ctgreenbank.com.

Following the review of the RFI responses, the Green Bank will issue forthcoming RFPs for a TPO financing partner and participating installers through Project SunBridge.

Freedom of Information Act. The Green Bank is a “public agency” for purposes of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”). Any information received pursuant to this RFI will be considered public records will be subject to disclosure under the FOIA, except for information falling within one of the exemptions in Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections § 1-210(b) and § 16-245n(d). It is also the Green Bank’s intention to utilize any and all information provided as part of your RFI response without attribution.

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[2] More information available at: https://cbey.yale.edu/programs/solar-energy-evolution-and-diffusion-studies-seeds.

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Appendix A: Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities ("LIDACs") Federal Definition & Mapping Resources

Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities: Section 134(a)(1) of the Clean Air Act directs that Recipients use funds for Financial Assistance and technical assistance "to enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy or benefit from zero-emissions technologies." "Low-income and disadvantaged communities" means CEJST-identified disadvantaged communities, EJScreen-identified disadvantaged communities, geographically dispersed low-income households, and properties providing affordable housing, as defined below.

- <u>CEJST-Identified Disadvantaged Communities</u>: All communities identified as disadvantaged through version 1.0 of the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST), released on November 22, 2022, which includes census tracts that meet the thresholds for at least one of the tool's categories of burden and land within the boundaries of Federally Recognized Tribes. [3]

- <u>EJScreen-Identified Disadvantaged Communities:</u> All communities within version 2.3 of EJScreen that fall within either (a) the limited supplemental set of census block groups that are at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen's supplemental indexes when compared to the nation or state or (b) geographic areas within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen, which includes the following Tribal lands: Alaska Native Allotments, Alaska Native Villages, American Indian Reservations, American Indian Off-reservation Trust Lands, and Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas.[4]

- <u>Geographically Dispersed Low-Income Households</u>: Low-income individuals and households living in Metropolitan Areas with incomes not more than 80% AMI or 200% FPL (whichever is higher), and low-income individuals and households living in Non-Metropolitan Areas with incomes not more than 80% AMI, 200% FPL, or 80% Statewide Non-Metropolitan Area AMI (whichever is highest). Federal Poverty Level ("FPL") is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Area Median Income (AMI) is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"). Metropolitan Area and Non-Metropolitan Area are defined using the latest publicly available figures for county-level designations from the Office of Management and Budget. Statewide Non-Metropolitan Area AMI is defined using the latest publicly available figures from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution ("CDFI") Fund, with an adjustment for household size using HUD's Family Size Adjustment factor.

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[3] Information currently available at: https://edgi-govdata-archiving.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/#3/33.47/-97.5
[4] Information currently available at: https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/.

- Properties Providing Affordable Housing: Properties providing affordable housing that fall within either of the following two categories: (a) multifamily housing with rents not exceeding 30% of 80% AMI for at least half of residential units and with an active affordability covenant from one of the following housing assistance programs: (1) Low-Income Housing Tax Credit; (2) a housing assistance program administered by HUD, including Public Housing, Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202 Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Housing for Disabled, Housing Trust Fund, Home Investment Partnership Program Affordable Rental and Homeowner Units, Permanent Supportive Housing, and other programs focused on ending homelessness that are funded under HUD's Continuum of Care Program; (3) a housing assistance program administered by USDA under Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, including under Sections 514 and 515; (4) a housing assistance program administered by a tribally designated housing entity, as defined in Section 4(22) of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 USC § 4103(22)); or (5) a housing assistance program administered by the Department of Hawaiian Homelands as defined in Title VIII of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (24 CFR 1006.10) or (b) naturally-occurring (unsubsidized) affordable housing with rents not exceeding 30% of 80% AMI for at least half of residential units.

- Federally Recognized Tribal Entities: All Federally Recognized Tribal entities, which are considered disadvantaged regardless of whether a Federally Recognized Tribe has land, consistent with M-23-09 (memorandum dated as of January 27, 2023) and CEJST. A "Federally Recognized Tribal Entity" means (i) any individual member of a Federally Recognized Tribe; (ii) any for-profit business that has at least 51 percent of its equity ownership (or the equivalent in limited liability companies) by members of Federally Recognized Tribes; (iii) any non-profit entity with at least 51 percent of its Board of Directors (i.e., Governing Board) comprised of members of Federally Recognized Tribes; or (iv) any Federally Recognized Tribal government entity. Under this definition, any Federally Recognized Tribal Entity is included within the definition of Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities, regardless of where that entity is located (i.e., the entity may be located in areas outside of the CEJST land area dataset, including but not limited to tribal service areas or counties).

Additional information on federal LIDACs in Connecticut can be found in the Green Bank's Community Opportunity Mapping & Program Availability Support System (COMPASS).