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Massachusetts Clean Energy Center launches Solarize Massachusetts program to spur solar development

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As part of a statewide effort to reach Governor Patrick's goal of 250 megawatts (MW) of solar power installed by 2017, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) launched the second round of its Solarize Massachusetts (Solarize Mass) program. MassCEC will begin accepting applications from designated Green Communities interested in participating in Solarize Mass, which encourages residents and business owners to adopt solar photovoltaic (PV) technology through a program model that includes grassroots marketing, education and group purchasing.

"Today you'll find solar projects in 328 out of our 351 cities and towns. This growth is not by accident, it's happened under the leadership of Governor Patrick through a suite of policies and programs designed to grow the state's solar business sector and put the cost of solar power within the reach of more people than ever before," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard Sullivan Jr., who chairs MassCEC's board of directors and whose office includes DOER. "Solarize Massachusetts will take these efforts to a new level, catalyzing wider adoption of solar energy and greater energy independence through the power of community connections."

The Solarize Mass Pilot, which launched in the spring of 2011, deployed a grassroots, volunteer-driven effort that is bringing solar power to 162 Massachusetts homes at discounted rates. By utilizing grassroots organizing, civic engagement, bulk purchasing, and educational outreach, the towns of Harvard, Hatfield, Scituate and Winchester helped their communities install a total of 829 kW of solar energy. The solar capacity installed through the Solarize Mass Pilot will save 651 metric tons of CO₂ annually. During their lifetimes, these PV systems will save over 13,000 metric tons of CO₂, equivalent to the emissions of more than 2,500 cars.

"Solarize Mass was incredibly successful in the first four towns and is empowering residents to drive growth of solar in their own communities, while helping us reach Governor Patrick's solar energy goals," said MassCEC CEO Patrick Cloney, "By spurring engagement and encouraging neighbor-to-neighbor advocacy for solar energy education and adoption, we look forward to helping more communities across Massachusetts become vibrant solar towns."

MassCEC, in partnership with the Green Communities Division of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) today launched the second iteration of Solarize Mass. MassCEC and DOER will select at least ten communities to participate. Selected communities will be announced in mid March. MassCEC will then issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for bulk purchasing business models from solar integrators in which installation costs are based on a tiered structure that provide lower costs with increased capacity of solar installed within the community. For each of the Solarize Mass communities, the chosen installer will partner with MassCEC and the community to provide free solar site assessments, different ownership (or financing) models, and installation services.

MassCEC will provide education and marketing support to help the selected communities

implement a community-wide solar PV program for residential and small-scale commercial projects. MassCEC will provide technical support and host free educational meetings in the communities to educate people about the benefits of installing solar and to drive interest in implementing the technology.

MassCEC and DOER will host a Bidders Conference in Harvard, MA. on February 27, 2012. Town officials and other representatives from Green Communities are invited to attend the Bidders Conference in person or remotely via webinar to learn more about the Solarize Massachusetts Pilot and ask questions about the RFP. More information about this event will be provided via email and will be available on MassCEC's website at www.MassCEC.com/solarizemass.

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