



## Public Service Commission

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John B. Rhodes, Chair

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### **Con Edison's 'Shared Solar' Project for Low-Income Customers is Approved — Con Edison's Pilot Project Will Lead to Other Neighborhood Solar Projects; Fulfills an Environmental Justice Goal of Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) —**

**ALBANY —** The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved a large-scale solar project in New York City that will generate clean energy dedicated exclusively to saving low-income customers money on their utility bills while also protecting the environment. This is one of the first “shared solar” systems for low-income residents in New York State and is an important milestone in the Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) strategy.

The system will be constructed by Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. as a pilot project that could include up to 1,600 customers throughout its service territory. Once operational, the system is expected to save each customer roughly \$5 a month from the solar energy sold back to the electric grid.

“This pilot program will not only show how community distributed generation, or CDG, can benefit a low-income neighborhood, it will also contribute to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo’s visionary Clean Energy Standard adopted by the Commission last year,” said **Commission Chair John B. Rhodes**. “By serving low-income residents with clean energy, Con Edison is filling a niche that hasn’t been fully served in the state. Furthermore, we believe this project, and the insight gained from this pilot, will lead to market development of other shared solar arrays around the state that will bring the benefits of clean energy to more low-income customers.”

Shared solar systems are an important goal of REV, Gov. Cuomo’s comprehensive strategy to fight climate change and grow New York’s economy by building a cleaner, more-resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers. The Department of Public Service and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will continue their work with solar energy developers, low-income advocates, utilities and others to develop similar shared solar systems across the state.

While the pilot project will initially produce 3 MW of power, Con Edison has proposed an expansion to 11 MW that could serve a total of 6,000 customers if the pilot is deemed successful. The solar panels will be placed on rooftops and property owned by Con Edison. It will help remove barriers that block low-income families in multi-family buildings from participating directly in solar energy projects.

Con Edison will select participants through a lottery process. Invitations will be sent to eligible customers who are enrolled in the company’s electric low-income affordability program, as well as the no-cost, energy-efficiency program offered by either Con Edison or NYSERDA.

Support for environmental justice and energy affordability for all New Yorkers are foundational goals of REV. Last year, the Commission approved the state's first-ever energy affordability policy, which increases the budget for low-income discounts to \$248 million, and provides an additional 550,000 low-income customers in direct cost relief each year. Notably, the new policy seeks to limit energy costs for low income New Yorkers, on average, to no more than six percent of household income — half of what many low-income households are currently paying.

Supported by all Con Edison ratepayers, the shared solar pilot program would not require any upfront payments or separate on-going payments for low-income customers to participate, and participants would continue to receive all the benefits of the electric low-income affordability program.

The Con Edison pilot program will also increase energy literacy and awareness, spurring additional participation in energy efficiency programs and will bring environmental benefits to communities that have borne the brunt of local air pollution. Statewide, the program will provide valuable lessons for designing future renewable energy programs.

Similar benefits are expected from a REV demonstration project in Buffalo where National Grid is installing rooftop solar panels on 170 low- and moderate-income homes, as well as a few community organizations located on Buffalo's East Side (known as the Fruit Belt). National Grid recently announced that the project had reached 500-kilowatts of generating capacity.

With today's decisions, the Commission indicated that it is not reaching conclusions on the ability of the market to serve low-income customers. To the contrary, the Commission anticipates that the rules and policies resulting from related REV policy proceedings will enable private development of solar assets to serve low-income customers, and that such that private development can be the primary method for engaging low-income customers in solar generation projects in the future. In addition, The Commission is committed to identifying ways to effectuate that outcome and looks forward to the work of the Low- and Moderate-Income Working Group that was recently formed as part of the Value of Distributed Energy Resources proceeding.

The Commission today also approved an order creating two new standardized forms to help manage the review of and the approval process for large solar energy systems. A 'site control' form will help determine the initial viability of a project, while a 'moratorium attestation' form will notify a utility when a local moratorium on solar development has been lifted or expired.

Today's decisions may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Numbers 16-E-0622 [Petition for Approval of a Pilot Program for Providing Shared Solar to Low-Income Customers] or 16-E-0560 [Joint Petition for Modifications to the New York State Standardized Interconnection Requirements and Application Process For New Distributed Generators 5 MW or Less Connected in Parallel with Utility Distribution Systems] in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.

## **About Reforming the Energy Vision**

Reforming the Energy Vision is Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's strategy to lead on climate change and grow New York's economy. REV is building a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy system for all New Yorkers by stimulating investment in clean technologies like solar, wind, and energy

efficiency and generating 50 percent of the state's electricity needs from renewable energy by 2030. Already, REV has driven nearly 800 percent growth in the statewide solar market, enabled over 105,000 low-income households to permanently cut their energy bills with energy efficiency, and created thousands of jobs in manufacturing, engineering, and other clean tech sectors. REV is ensuring New York State reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030 and achieves the internationally-recognized target of reducing emissions 80 percent by 2050. To learn more about REV, including the Governor's \$5 billion investment in clean energy technology and innovation, please visit [www.ny.gov/REV4NY](http://www.ny.gov/REV4NY) and follow us at @Rev4NY.