



# California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PUC ADOPTS LOW-INCOME SOLAR INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES**

SAN FRANCISCO, November 16, 2007 - The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today adopted an unprecedented \$108 million program that delivers incentives to low-income, single-family homeowners under the California Solar Initiative program. The California Solar Initiative Single-Family Low-Income Incentive Program is the first statewide low-income solar program to be implemented at this scale.

The California Solar Initiative's goal is to drive the installation of 3,000 megawatts of high-performing new solar installations in the state over the next 10 years, moving the state toward a cleaner energy future. In adopting the California Solar Initiative, the PUC allocated 10 percent (\$216.7 million) of the program's total budget for the installation of solar systems on low-income residences. Today's decision adopts the program that will provide incentives for those installations on single-family, owner-occupied homes. The remaining \$108 million is reserved for the low-income program for multi-family residences, which is currently under development.

"California has the second largest solar incentive program in the world. Through the Single-Family Low-Income Incentive Program approved today, our goal is to provide low-income homeowners access to solar photovoltaic systems, to decrease electricity usage and reduce bills without increasing monthly expenses," said PUC President Michael R. Peevey. "By enabling low-income households to purchase photovoltaic systems, this program will help ensure that all Californians have an opportunity to avail themselves of the benefits provided by the clean energy technologies this Commission so ardently supports, including solar."

"As a member of the PUC's Low-Income Oversight Board, I am pleased that we are reaching out to those Californians who are otherwise unable to participate in the state's solar initiative," said Commissioner Dian M. Grueneich. "A key piece of this program is the requirement for applicants to enroll in the PUC's Low-Income Energy Efficiency program and have energy efficiency measures installed prior to receiving the solar incentives."

“This program will make sure that low-income single family owners can help save money and save the earth by becoming their own generators of solar energy,” commented Commissioner Rachelle Chong. “I encourage our outreach to low-income families be conducted in non-English languages such as Spanish and Chinese.”

“All Californians should have the opportunity to generate clean energy from solar photovoltaics. Not only will this program bring solar to the homes of low-income communities, but it’s my hope that it will provide job training and wealth enhancement opportunities for the very same communities,” said Commissioner Timothy Alan Simon, who will join with The Willie Brown Jr. Institute on Politics & Public Service to host a symposium in January 2008 on investments and green jobs.

The program will provide incentives that range from \$4.75 to \$7 per watt, as compared to the general market California Solar Initiative program, which began with subsidies of \$2.50 per watt. The incentives will subsidize roughly 50 to 75 percent of the photovoltaic system, and they are expected to be available to approximately 5,000 qualifying homeowners. The Single-Family Low-Income Incentive Program Manager will help incentive recipients find loans and grants to cover the remaining cost of the system. Unlike the general market California Solar Initiative program, the incentives will not decline as the number of megawatts installed grows.

The program will also reach out to California’s lowest-income households who cannot afford to take out loans to cover the cost of the system by providing fully-subsidized, 1kW photovoltaic systems for qualifying homeowners with incomes up to 50 percent of the area median income. The program will provide these fully subsidized systems to approximately 1,800 qualifying households.

The California Solar Initiative Single-Family Low-Income Incentive Program will be managed by a single, statewide entity with a history and knowledge of serving low-income communities. The Program Manager will be contracted through the investor-owned utilities, and will be chosen through a competitive Request for Proposal process. An independent program evaluator will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the program’s management and execution every two years.

For more information on the PUC, please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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