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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC STAFF REPORTS SOLAR PROGRAM DOUBLED INSTALLATIONS IN 2008 COMPARED TO PRIOR YEAR

SAN FRANCISCO, January 28, 2009 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today issued a quarterly staff progress report on the California Solar Initiative, showing that in 2008 Californians installed twice as many megawatts (MW) of solar power than the year before, and that demand for new solar projects continues to hit record levels.

“Our staff report outlines the great strides we have made with solar power in California and demonstrates the commitment the state and its consumers have to clean energy,” said CPUC President Michael R. Peevey. “Californians can be proud of the state’s leadership role in reducing dependence on fossil fuels through investment in and adoption of environmentally sustainable generating technologies.”

According to the CPUC’s January Staff Progress Report on the California Solar Initiative, homeowners, businesses, and local governments in California’s Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) territories installed 158 MW of distributed solar photovoltaics (PV) in 2008, doubling the 78 MW installed in IOU territories in 2007. California now boasts a cumulative total of 441 MW of distributed solar PV systems, the highest level of solar installations in the country.

“The California Solar Initiative continues to reach major milestones,” said CPUC Energy Division Director Julie Fitch. “California is the nation’s largest solar market and its continued growth demonstrates that solar is a viable energy resource that can strengthen California’s economy as we pursue aggressive goals to fight global warming.”



The California Solar Initiative has spurred more than \$5 billion worth of private investment in solar projects by California consumers. On average, for every \$1 in incentive committed by the California Solar Initiative, an additional \$6 in private funds is invested in solar technology in California. To date, the California Solar Initiative has paid or reserved nearly \$775 million in incentives for total estimated project costs totaling more than \$5 billion.

Based on the large number of new applications to the program received in the fourth quarter, the rate of installations for solar projects in California is expected to remain strong in 2009. The CPUC reports that in the fourth quarter, the California Solar Initiative broke previous records for most applications in a single quarter and most applications received in a single month.

“We are thrilled with the California Solar Initiative’s pace of installations and pleased to see that new solar applications continue at record levels. Even the economic downturn has not slowed the record pace at which Californians are going solar,” said Molly Tirpak Sterkel, Distributed Generation and California Solar Initiative Program Supervisor at the CPUC. “The solar program doubled the amount of solar we installed in 2008 compared with the previous year, and we continue to set new records for applications into the program that will lead to future installations in the program.”

To date, the program has received applications for roughly 322 MW of grid-tied, distributed solar PV projects. The California Solar Initiative now has 18,290 active applications. Of these projects, 11,810 applications are complete, representing 152 MW of capacity that has come online in 2007 and 2008 under the program. Additional projects from solar programs that pre-dated the California Solar Initiative’s launch on January 1, 2007, also came online in 2007 and 2008.

The amount of solar installed under the California Solar Initiative varies by utility territory and customer type, residential and non-residential (non-residential projects include businesses, governments, non-profits, schools, and agricultural facilities):

- Customers of Pacific Gas and Electric Company have installed 33 MW of residential and 45 MW of non-residential projects; they have an additional 19 MW of residential and 89 MW of non-residential projects pending installation.



- Customers of Southern California Edison have installed 13 MW of residential and 49 MW of non-residential projects; they have an additional 7 MW of residential and 35 MW of non-residential projects pending installation.
- Customers of San Diego Gas and Electric Company, who receive rebates via the California Center for Sustainable Energy, have installed 4 MW of residential projects and 3 MW of non-residential projects; they have an additional 8 MW of residential and 18 MW of non-residential projects pending installation.

The California Solar Initiative is a ratepayer-funded program that is overseen by the CPUC and provides incentives for solar system installations to customers of the state's three IOUs. The program provides upfront incentives for solar systems installed on existing residential homes, as well as existing and new commercial, industrial, government, non-profit, and agricultural properties within the service territories of the IOUs. The California Solar Initiative has a budget of \$2.17 billion over 10 years, and the goal is to reach 1,940 MW of installed solar capacity by the end of 2016.

The California Solar Initiative was first conceived in 2004, when Governor Schwarzenegger widened state support for solar and announced the Million Solar Roofs Program. In 2006, the CPUC and the California Energy Commission collaboratively developed a framework for the program, and with the Governor's support and the statutory authority expressed by Senate Bill 1 (Murray, 2006), the California Solar Initiative was officially launched on January 1, 2007.

The Staff Progress Report on the California Solar Initiative is available at www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/energy/Solar/.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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