

Western Massachusetts Solar Forum: Session 3 Transcript - September 19, 2023

Participant: UMass CEE [UC] English (US)

00:23:31 [UC0] All right, we'll get started.

00:23:33 [UC0] Good afternoon friends.

00:23:35 [UC0] I'm so happy to see. So many people joining. My name is Jo Comerford and I am taking a turn at facilitating, this western Mass solar Forum.

00:23:47 [UC0] We're getting started, just a minute late as people come into the zoom Channel.

00:23:52 [UC0] We're so happy to have all of you here.

00:23:55 [UC0] This is session. 3 of The Solar Forum focused on solar.

00:24:00 [UC0] Tea and Community benefits.

00:24:03 [UC0] And we have a wonderful lineup of people.

00:24:07 [UC0] I'll go through just a few Logistics so that we all have the context in the information that we need. So first let's get oriented.

00:24:18 [UC0] You are in, of course, a zoom room and we're grateful to see vent for helping us facilitate this. We can in this Zoom room, see the speakers we have

00:24:32 [UC0] Simultaneous ASL, translation, and interpretation, thanks to Lori and Elizabeth and we just want to make sure that we all know that to keep this pretty jammed agenda going right now. The chat

00:24:47 [UC0] Has been disabled for all attendees.

00:24:50 [UC0] It's being used behind the scenes for facilitators. Your cameras are off as you come in but you're welcome to turn them on and again, ASL interpretation is live and active for you now.

00:25:05 [UC0] Let's flip over to What's called the event platform or attendee Hub.

00:25:11 [UC0] There is a ton of information on that platform and there you can ask questions

00:25:16 [UC0] that moderators will help ensure our answered either in real time or post Forum.

00:25:25 [UC0] You can see the Bayou is of the good folks who are presenting today, you can see our agenda and you can see simultaneous transcription and also Spanish language translation.

00:25:37 [UC0] I also want to point you directly to a post session survey, which if you take it, it'll help us do this work better for session for. So this is session

00:25:46 [UC0] June, 3 of a four-part series.

00:25:52 [UC0] Okay, so here's a bit about using the attendee Hub again, which is chock-full of information. So, up in the right-hand corner of the platform, you can see where to ask a question, you can

00:26:07 [UC0] See where you can take a survey and you can get access to translation, you can also see the speaker bios.

00:26:17 [UC0] so when this closes at 3:00, the post-session survey will be open right before that and then we'll stay open for 48 hours afterwards on the attendee Hub and I

00:26:32 [UC0] To thank the people who have already filled out. The post-session surveys for sessions one and two.

00:26:38 [UC0] You're making us all smarter and better about how to do this work with you.

00:26:44 [UC0] This really important work.

00:26:45 [UC0] If something happens in western Mass, we know, internet happens if

you leave the zoom meeting for a because of the internet, or because you have another meeting and you want to pop back on, you can always

00:27:00 [UC0] Rejoin.

00:27:01 [UC0] This is a really wonderful feature, and of course, we're recording all of these, and they will be available on the clean energy extensions website along with speaker presentations.

00:27:12 [UC0] So it's going to be a wealth of information.

00:27:16 [UC0] So just so you know, when you ask a question they will not, it will not be visible to other attendees and what are called. Sub moderators will help distill similar

00:27:32 [UC0] For all of us and they'll give them to me. And with, you know, with every minute we have, we will ask as many questions as we can. And then again, I just want to reinforce those that we cannot answer in real time

00:27:47 [UC0] Are going to be part of a follow-up paper and will help inform. What is a part two of this forum?

00:27:56 [UC0] Thanks to the clean energy extensions, good thinking.

00:28:01 [UC0] So, you know, I'm, I represent the Hampshire Franklin. Worcester District in the Massachusetts state Senate. And I want to thank my colleagues who you can see listed here on the screen for co-sponsoring this

00:28:16 [UC0] this effort with the clean energy extension, it is good to be United as a district or region, along with the clean energy extension about the importance of having this conversation on.

00:28:32 [UC0] Solar solar Equity, solar and land, use solar and Community.

00:28:37 [UC0] Like we're going to do today.

00:28:40 [UC0] This is a little awkward.

00:28:42 [UC0] This is a special appreciation to myself and state representative Mindy. Domb, my sister and service to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

00:28:52 [UC0] We've had the privilege of working closely with our clean energy, extension colleagues, who have been nothing short of really miraculous here. And I just want to really shout out the municipal and other state officials

00:29:07 [UC0] Of joined us. Today, one of the best things about this forum is that it's collecting folks in our region in Western Massachusetts and across the state who want to have this conversation with us.

00:29:19 [UC0] I want to shout out to the Healey Driscoll Administration that has absolutely shown up for this, as well as many Advocates locally and Statewide many researchers, and experts and

00:29:34 [UC0] Any from the industry who were engaging in in ways that I hope will bear fruit for us all coming going forward.

00:29:44 [UC0] But we couldn't have done it without this group of folks.

00:29:47 [UC0] This is the solar Forum planning committee and the names you see here, you may also see show up as presenters as some some of them will today or as facilitators

00:30:02 [UC0] And this was a group of folks pulled together by the clean energy extension to help.

00:30:08 [UC0] Make sure that the content of today, the speaker's Focus, the materials, the focus on accessibility and Equity really came through.

00:30:18 [UC0] So I'm personally grateful to them as well.

00:30:24 [UC0] So, I'm going to talk to you about session 3 agenda right now.

00:30:32 [UC0] I'm going to go back so the session 3 agenda is on the attendee Hub. One thing I just want to talk to you about is that some of the presenters who we

had hoped would join us today.

00:30:44 [UC0] Have either Fallen ill.

00:30:46 [UC0] These are tough times as we know or have had their calendars become chock-full.

00:30:52 [UC0] We ask a lot of people as, you know, in terms of showing up for forms like these. So they may be able to

00:31:00 [UC0] Join us or I'm a note in real time that someone is going to come later or we will hear from them. Perhaps in another Forum.

00:31:10 [UC0] Remember we have forum for where we'll hear some Community perspectives on solar.

00:31:15 [UC0] So the the agenda is on the attendee Hub and we'll try to keep you up to date as it twists and turns a little bit today. Okay.

00:31:26 [UC0] session three follow-up. So again don't miss the post-session sir.

00:31:30 [UC0] Hervé you can expect thanks to the clean energy extension that you'll get a follow-up, email with a link to the recording and it's going to be posted.

00:31:42 [UC0] And the questions again will be answered whether they're answered live or in writing.

00:31:48 [UC0] So this is a real commitment to transparency and accountability.

00:31:52 [UC0] And this is my Shameless pitch for coming to session for which I think will be very, very important. That's a perspective.

00:32:00 [UC0] Herbs on solar.

00:32:01 [UC0] So we'll hear from community members.

00:32:03 [UC0] Town administrators will hear from solder.

00:32:07 [UC0] providers will hear from some landowners that we think it's very important that we get a human perspective and an on-the-ground in the trenches perspective on solar.

00:32:20 [UC0] And it's next week, right?

00:32:21 [UC0] So this is our last in this series of four solar sessions. And before I turn it over to our first Speaker. I really just want to say just on behalf of myself and rep, Tom and our colleagues in Western

00:32:36 [UC0] It's a big thanks to the clean energy extension.

00:32:39 [UC0] I'm pretty sure that when they first thought about putting this together, they will perhaps they could have imagined how difficult it would be and how painstaking. But but they've really seen it through

00:32:54 [UC0] So many of you who are here today and with such great feedback coming in.

00:32:59 [UC0] And again I see many of you who are offering that feedback here with us today and it's so important that we have this exchange.

00:33:07 [UC0] So I'm going to go on now and I'm just looking at who's going first.

00:33:17 [UC0] And I believe we are starting a Lynn is Lynn is coming next perfect.

00:33:24 [UC0] So friends I'm we are going to hear from John Ave in a moment. But first Lynn, been under from Co-op power is going to speak with us. Remember you can see Lynn's bio in the attendee

00:33:39 [UC0] And I'm going to turn it over right now to Lynn with my thanks.

00:33:55 [UC0] And unmuting is always a good idea when you're doing these things.

00:34:01 [UC0] thank you so much. And are saying thank you, Joe for your leadership in helping to plan. This very important. In fact, and I'm looking forward to all the conversation that I merged.

00:34:12 [UC0] As this important information is shared.

00:34:14 [UC0] I've been asked to talk about models for Community ownership and solar equity.

00:34:19 [UC0] And let me just see how I'm gonna do this off here.

00:34:25 [UC0] I'm sorry for the delay.

00:34:27 [UC0] Oh, it did work.

00:34:29 [UC0] Hmm.

00:34:30 [UC0] All right.

00:34:31 [UC0] slide show. It wasn't progressing.

00:34:34 [UC0] So, the reason that we're talking about the ownership right at the beginning, because it is of this Equity Workshop is because it is a very, very important way that communities can redirect

00:34:50 [UC0] The economic value of this solar Revolution back into their communities.

00:34:56 [UC0] So the money often is extracted from local communities, the communities no longer have those dollars for recirculating, but if we own the Solar projects in our communities, then we have the

00:35:11 [UC0] Jobs the savings and the wealth that come along with it and it's been really fun to see the current governor's office approach to this. And it

00:35:26 [UC0] So, the button here is in this relations approach to this. Whereas before the work that I've been doing through Co-op, our building Community ownership opportunities was often looked at, as somehow like with confused,

00:35:41 [UC0] Like, you have to be financially naive Doer.

00:36:11 [UC0] Great local economies to create economic social, political power that has been kind of stripped from a low-income communities and communities of color. And but it's also an opportunity for all of us for

00:36:26 [UC0] Other communities to have this economic engine read directly back to our communities, using our tax payer and rate their money to make some really pretty amazing things happen.

00:36:42 [UC0] And the because dividing here is Administration is, you know, really directing a lot of funds toward this along with it. Just luckily ministration we can see

00:36:57 [UC0] A real Renaissance here of of communities, being the Hub of the economic activity here.

00:37:07 [UC0] If we take advantage of all these stuff tuna teased before us and what are the benefits that you can get? If you own, your own solar is, well, you own an income-producing asset. That's kind of a cool thing to happen. We're also able

00:37:23 [UC0] To create more energy, awareness of the story. I just got a text from River.

00:37:33 [UC0] My user name is Co-op. Power wasn't able to change it.

00:37:36 [UC0] sorry about that. So we got income producing assets. We've got more in education because people can see things going on in their Community.

00:37:44 [UC0] We decrease greenhouse gas, emissions and Community, energy burden. We also improve air quality, as we shift to Renewables.

00:37:52 [UC0] We have new green jobs and new businesses come back into our community because also create individual benefits for people in our communities, where it lowers, their monthly bill for electricity for energy.

00:38:08 [UC0] They can also participate in energy co-ops in the members and have it a group that they can make change and transformation happen in their Community.

00:38:19 [UC0] We can have customer friendly terms and this has been a big issue

right now, with some of the low income programs. But all of the programs where there's been some predatory practices and have really

00:38:34 [UC0] Harms communities. But if we own them, we can make sure that these aren't happening and we can provide solar options for the great majority of people and organizations and businesses that can't own their own solar on

00:38:49 [UC0] The top. So we can prove we can work together to put a lot of other benefits together in extractive solar. In my world means that the value of the solar project is

00:39:04 [UC0] Removed from the community where solar developers. Pay a small site owner lease fee and all of the rest of financing money that's made in developer money.

00:39:16 [UC0] That's made goes out of their community and often none of the electricity or the other renewable energy attributes.

00:39:25 [UC0] stay in that Community.

00:39:27 [UC0] But when we own our car solar, that that can all stay here, increase our energy,

00:39:33 [UC0] Things create good jobs in a more control over our Energy, Future Energy, Independence and resilience when catastrophe strikes. So, these are all the benefits of this ownership.

00:39:47 [UC0] Can you tell? I really like the energy. This ownership model, but I've just seen it work so well.

00:39:51 [UC0] And so many places was working with a group of African American organizations in Chicago and this is their statement about what the problem is and why energy

00:40:03 [UC0] cooperatives and low income. And people of color communities is an answer and I just thought they said it.

00:40:12 [UC0] Well I'm not going to read it to you but they said this is a time for Reckoning because there's indentured servitude that's happening in low-income communities as if fences and police gateshead pendous

00:40:27 [UC0] And we can't get access to the things we need for basic dignity, to take care of our families with pride to have jobs that work for us and we are at a crisis here and the

00:40:42 [UC0] Solution a solution, so many good solutions that people are working on now, but one solution is that energy cooperatives, where low-income people and own them either in low-income people of color, LED

00:40:57 [UC0] Stations who are in multi-class multi stakeholder organizations where people of color on the front line, low income. People on the front line are playing particularly important leadership role that that these organizations can

00:41:13 [UC0] On a dress, these huge problems, communities are facing and they missed the, it Revolution, they missed other revolutions before and it had red lining in all kinds of revolutions. That that extracted, well from them.

00:41:28 [UC0] And they don't want to miss the renewable energy Revolution.

00:41:32 [UC0] They want to make sure that these benefits come back and serve.

00:41:38 [UC0] and so the community benefits in for for everyday folk creating access to Renewables and securing Energy savings is some is life saving in a low-income or people of color Community, where it reduces their energy, burden, some people pay

00:41:53 [UC0] To 30% of their income.

00:41:57 [UC0] To secure energy to stay alive, and have to choose between food and energy, resilience and energy. Independence is a wonderful thing in all of our

communities, but it actually saves lives in an emergency and low-income communities, and people

00:42:12 [UC0] Our communities, we what they we all want to build community wealth, create jobs and businesses, but in low income communities, and people of color communities, it creates Pathways out of poverty. We want to reduce carbon pollution, air, pollution, and

00:42:27 [UC0] these communities that have been hardest hit by air pollution in, in, in, with coal plants and other very polluting ways of producing electricity in these

00:42:42 [UC0] Communities that are hardest, hit by climate change, this act of reducing carbon pollution and air-pollution. Again saves lives, reduces health hazards and reduces the harm cost climate emergencies.

00:42:57 [UC0] And we get in all of our communities, we get to decide where in our backyard, we want things, but in low-income communities, it gives them a seat at the table with experts, that work for them that they otherwise don't have.

00:43:13 [UC0] There are all kinds of project models.

00:43:16 [UC0] that can that communities can own? Can really be any project model that you can think of if communities feel like this is a priority for us to have large community shared solar arrays are my favorite

00:43:31 [UC0] Or resilience hubs that can offer refrigeration and eating and warming and cooling centers for in a climate emergency, whatever the priorities are for communities and ownership model can be designed to

00:43:46 [UC0] Net value to them. And communities fillers, do not know, then I'm sorry. We're just going to eye. We'd love your passion. We're just going to have to ask you to wrap up just so that we stay on time.

00:43:58 [UC0] Certainly let me go to the solar Finance models for Community ownership for all projects you pay with cash you layer on debt, you get the incentives

00:44:13 [UC0] And then you take the tax credits and there's several different kinds. And this is a picture of the river valley. Co Op project in East Hampton that we're just commissioning now in partnership with son wealth. And it's a, it's a way that all of the

00:44:28 [UC0] Income subscribers who are getting half of that canopy array, get to share in the ownership and the Savings in the River. Valley Market was able to offset all of its electric youth over the course of

00:44:43 [UC0] Year with these with this installation.

00:44:46 [UC0] So me ownership, it's got great opportunities and the IRA incentives, the greenhouse gas reduction fund, 27 billion dollars, hitting the streets.

00:44:58 [UC0] Next July, all of these, give opportunities for Community ownership, and I hope that we can all work together to make that happen.

00:45:07 [UC0] Thank you Jo. Thank you. Thank you. Lynn for your passion and your

00:45:13 [UC0] A lifetime of work and we know ten minutes is a ridiculous time to share the kind of depth of work. So I'm sure they'll be questions and I'm sure you know, folks are, you know, just so grateful for Co-Op.

00:45:28 [UC0] Next speaker is John Rabe from son, wealth.

00:45:33 [UC0] John were grateful that you're here and we're going to hear from John for 10 minutes and then we'll move on.

00:45:39 [UC0] Just so folks know where we're going to hear from a bulk of speakers and then we'll take questions before a break.

00:45:45 [UC0] So that's our agenda. John welcome.  
00:45:50 [UC0] Thank you very much and it's not at all. Follow Lynn.  
00:45:54 [UC0] I'm sorry for the background noise.  
00:45:56 [UC0] I'm in a corner at the airport, so diving, right in.  
00:46:02 [UC0] Can you show the first slider out of this for huh?  
00:46:07 [UC0] Okay and if you have you have the ability to share John. If you can share your screen, if that's possible.  
00:46:16 [UC0] Oh, got it.  
00:46:18 [UC0] Sorry I  
00:46:21 [UC0] Do not feel. Sorry.  
00:46:22 [UC0] This is We're All in This Together.  
00:46:24 [UC0] Yeah, I'm Simon stream, is it?  
00:46:27 [UC0] I didn't load my slump.  
00:46:29 [UC0] I'd show if you hold on one second.  
00:46:30 [UC0] I might be able to find it.  
00:46:32 [UC0] Okay? And let's we can do a little background talking with clean energy extension, perhaps they have your slideshow to  
00:46:43 [UC0] This is Marion River. We can John.  
00:46:46 [UC0] John. We can open your presentation and put it up on the screen.  
00:46:50 [UC0] Beautiful.  
00:46:51 [UC0] Thanks friends.  
00:46:52 [UC0] Thank you Marianne.  
00:46:54 [UC0] I appreciate it.  
00:46:55 [UC0] Nice file called regarding writer and just elaborate on what they've said.  
00:47:01 [UC0] We're going to focus on third-party ownership of Community Based solar projects and again, having a third party coming in and co-develop and own the project doesn't preclude trying to optimize  
00:47:16 [UC0] And if it's for the community as well as eventual Community ownership options. And so, starting with slide one,  
00:47:28 [UC0] I guess I could talk a little bit.  
00:47:30 [UC0] I'm John.  
00:47:30 [UC0] I'm with son, Walt, we're a public benefit Corporation.  
00:47:33 [UC0] We co-develop and finance and operate impactful Community projects.  
00:47:41 [UC0] We have about 600 operational projects in 17 states with houses of worship not-for-profits, small businesses, you name it and a lot of our businesses right here in Massachusetts  
00:47:56 [UC0] We have offices in Cambridge and New York City.  
00:48:04 [UC0] All right, thank you so much.  
00:48:06 [UC0] Mary Ann and going through the first slide if you don't mind.  
00:48:19 [UC0] So here's just an example of how the model works.  
00:48:22 [UC0] So son wealth, you know, either work with a local developer like Co-op or we develop the projects ourselves. We work with the utility to handle how any Community solar transactions going to  
00:48:38 [UC0] /.  
00:48:38 [UC0] We raised the money and finance the projects, we work with local customers to make sure that they receive the Energy savings from the project.  
00:48:49 [UC0] We work almost exclusively with local small businesses to develop and install the system.  
00:48:56 [UC0] And we also work with other community stakeholders to see if there's

other things we can do around the project.

00:49:02 [UC0] And the example of the River Valley Co-op projects with Lynn, we wouldn't make sure that they

00:49:07 [UC0] A donor's not only realized significant up some savings.

00:49:12 [UC0] They had the leadership already, The View working with local installers and designers to create local jobs. And then they also wanted to make sure that even though we were the third party financing. The project that they have clear options to buy the

00:49:27 [UC0] Project studying your cannabis and moving on to some examples.

00:49:39 [UC0] So, this is an example of a project we own and operate.

00:49:43 [UC0] It's one of the older ones who was originally developed by bluehub capital and formerly known as Boston Community Capital. And this is the project where the benefits

00:49:58 [UC0] Not only go to Gardner and form of property, tax revenue, and a these payments for the site, which they own. But in addition to that the Energy savings which are about 3 percent discount off of net, metering credits,

00:50:13 [UC0] That is selling National Grid coupons for 70 cents on the dollar go to a number of local not-for-profit, including the Boys and Girls Club in Gardner. Next slide, please.

00:50:29 [UC0] Thank you.

00:50:30 [UC0] And this is an example of how sometimes corporations decide they want to be good neighbors.

00:50:36 [UC0] So in this example we leased the top of a parking garage from Boston properties and in this they receive Energy savings but half the project power goes to local

00:50:51 [UC0] Portable housing.

00:50:53 [UC0] Providers, including Caritas and communities, and also to low income rate, parents in the greater wealth.

00:51:04 [UC0] I'm area. Next project. Next slide, please.

00:51:10 [UC0] And Holyoke gas/electric.

00:51:12 [UC0] Here's an example.

00:51:12 [UC0] We did with HTE out in western Mass, we release the site from HTE and we set up this PPA. So the benefit goes through the Holyoke housing authority and Julio, Gas

00:51:28 [UC0] Electric is a really great partner next. Slide, please.

00:51:37 [UC0] And here's an interesting project, if you've ever read civil action, the book about the contamination will burn Massachusetts.

00:51:45 [UC0] This is also actually on that site. And it's basically Universe built some self-storage facilities on the site, and we turn the rooftop and for low-income Community solar project, which benefits not only

00:52:01 [UC0] Lie, low income residents in the greater will burn area but also provides meaningful savings to heading home, which is another affordable. Housing provider,

00:52:10 [UC0] And the next slide please and schakowsky farm out in Hadley.

00:52:17 [UC0] This is a really cool project because it is an agricultural take projects where between the rows of these solar panels, they'll be growing, broccoli will be learning a lot about how that works in the coming years and in

00:52:32 [UC0] Listen to creating an additional Revenue source for the farm in terms of both Energy savings and a lease payment. This project also provides twenty five percent discounts on Western



00:52:47 [UC0] Survivor Source West coupons through a number of low-income residents in the area.

00:52:56 [UC0] Next slide, please.

00:53:00 [UC0] And this is just a little bit about son wealth.

00:53:03 [UC0] I want to applaud everyone who's putting on this panel, and maiko speakers for the excellent work.

00:53:09 [UC0] They're doing.

00:53:09 [UC0] And I look forward to the question and answer period.

00:53:13 [UC0] Thank you very much.

00:53:15 [UC0] Thank you, John.

00:53:16 [UC0] Thanks for muscling through transit to be with us and thanks to Mary and River for hunting with the slides.

00:53:24 [UC0] This was terrific.

00:53:25 [UC0] We appreciate you.

00:53:26 [UC0] It was a wonderful.

00:53:29 [UC0] Wonderful extension of what limb was talking about and now I agree.

00:53:34 [UC0] We welcome your questions in the Q&A, remember the attendee Hub. And now, we're really lucky to hear from Priya gone to beer from conservation law Foundation. Whose

00:53:44 [UC0] And to talk about the role of federal, state and local laws and regulations, Pria welcome.

00:53:52 [UC0] Afternoon, do you hear me?

00:53:55 [UC0] All right, we can.

00:53:56 [UC0] Yeah.

00:53:56 [UC0] perfect.

00:53:58 [UC0] All right.

00:53:59 [UC0] Good afternoon.

00:53:59 [UC0] And thank you to UMass and to the form organizers for having me.

00:54:04 [UC0] My name is Priya conveyor and I am an attorney at conservation law Foundation.

00:54:09 [UC0] Now just clf Steele, f is a member supported environmental advocacy organization.

00:54:16 [UC0] It uses the law policy science and markets to advocate for a clean healthy and Sustainable New England for all residents.

00:54:27 [UC0] I work on CLS, clean energy, and climate change program.

00:54:30 [UC0] And in this role I advocate for more clean resources, supplying energy to the Region's electric grid for rapidly. Reducing our Reliance on fossil fuels for electricity buildings and transportation and for ensuring

00:54:45 [UC0] That New England's transition to a clean energy future prioritises the most vulnerable members of our community.

00:54:53 [UC0] I don't have slides so you just have to look at me this whole time, deployment of solar energy is key to the transition to our Clean Energy Future.

00:55:03 [UC0] It's clean energy, and climate change and clean energy, and climate plan for 2030.

00:55:09 [UC0] The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, estimated that, approximately 27 to 34. Gigawatts of solar is needed by 2050, in order to reach Statewide emissions limits.

00:55:21 [UC0] Currently Massachusetts only has three gigawatts of solar installed. And according to a report prepared for the Commonwealth bison, a bison X energy economics, installation and deployment of solar energy will have to occur

00:55:36 [UC0] Iterate almost 4 times. The current Pace in order to achieve the 27 to 34 gigawatts of solar needed to meet Massachusetts emissions limits, construction of new

00:55:51 [UC0] Clean energy. Infrastructure will be costly and will require careful review of where this infrastructure will be sited in order to protect vulnerable, communities and resources planning and development of

00:56:07 [UC0] It's of this infrastructure requires the coordination of funding citing policy and construction and necessitates communication among Planning Development and conservation agencies at the

00:56:22 [UC0] Isabel, state and federal levels.

00:56:27 [UC0] Last year, the passage of the federal inflation reduction act, enable the distribution of almost 800 billion dollars in tax incentives and funding towards efforts to mitigate climate change.

00:56:40 [UC0] This includes development of energy, manufacturing transportation and environmental, justice environmental, justice, and climate resilience and retrofitting, buildings with clean and efficient energy resources,

00:56:56 [UC0] the inflation reduction act also, instead it extended a consumer tax credit for solar investment, which may operate in conjunction with rebates for Mass Save by 10 years,

00:57:10 [UC0] And established a green Bank, to encourage investments in decarbonise energy, such as solar power in communities, with limited up with limited opportunities for financing such projects.

00:57:24 [UC0] Funding from the inflation reduction act does not automatically get distributed to States and communities.

00:57:30 [UC0] Among the initiatives arising from the federal, and Elation reduction Act is a solar for all program.

00:57:38 [UC0] A great competition which will distribute seven billion dollars of green Bank funding to low-income and disadvantaged communities to install solar panels.

00:57:49 [UC0] In addition to advancing efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas, emissions, and prevent pollution resulting from combustion of fossil fuels or burning of other fuel sources.

00:57:59 [UC0] This program is expected to help lower energy costs for participating. Consumers, and create good quality, local jobs for the communities, which receive funding from this overall grant program

00:58:15 [UC0] Over the summer, Massachusetts Department of energy resources and Massachusetts clean energy center held. Stakeholder sessions to inform their proposal for the solar fro all program, which they will submit a week from today on Tuesday, September

00:58:30 [UC0] you sensed in their proposal, the state seeks 400 million in funding from, the solar, for all Grant and estimates that that will result in an installation of solar panels for approximately

00:58:46 [UC0] Now, some households masscec. That's also seeks to expand existing low income solar programs.

00:58:55 [UC0] In their application, the Commonwealth proposes that participants be able to take direct ownership of solar panels installed on their homes, or be able to use a lease-to-own option for installing solar panels.

00:59:11 [UC0] The application contemplates incentives for multifamily public housing, and privately owned affordable housing, as well as Community Solar Development, which we've heard a little bit about already but to reiterate

00:59:26 [UC0] Community solar presents an interesting and unique opportunity for consumers who cannot otherwise use solar because of obstacles, such as lack of access, or availability of roof space, lack of direct sunlight to their roof

00:59:41 [UC0] Or property or because they rent their home.

00:59:46 [UC0] Under Community solar programs consumers can purchase panels on a solar farm or subscribe to community solar program in. Each instance, they would receive a some amount of credits for the energy generated by the solar panels.

01:00:02 [UC0] On their electricity, bill each month.

01:00:05 [UC0] Of course, a potential drawback of community solar project is the requirement that they install solar Farms where large swaths of land might be raised and covered in solar panels.

01:00:18 [UC0] This brings to light the need for careful and deliberate sighting of solar projects.

01:00:25 [UC0] As I mentioned earlier in order to achieve Massachusetts, clean energy goals and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and the Commonwealth. We must ramp up efforts to develop solar energy by about four times. The current Pace although solar panels

01:00:40 [UC0] Can be constructed on rooftops and over parking lots construction of additional infrastructure especially in an affordable manner will require the use of undeveloped land.

01:00:51 [UC0] Massachusetts laws regarding natural resources do contemplate. The inherent value of natural lands. But some spaces, certainly provide more value, such as wildlife habitat, stormwater drainage or

01:01:07 [UC0] Control Green Space for disadvantaged communities and air, and water filtration than others. Do

01:01:16 [UC0] this summer, Massachusetts Department of energy resources released a study and Report prepared by synapse energy, economics titled Massachusetts, technical potential of solar in which the consultants and apps evaluated the

01:01:31 [UC0] Potential to develop solar energy in the Commonwealth.

01:01:34 [UC0] In its review of potential areas for construction of additional energy, solar energy in Massachusetts synapse evaluated Parcels of Land Based on potential, agricultural, use biodiversity, ecosystems services.

01:01:49 [UC0] Says embedded carbon dioxide, which is the amount of carbon dioxide?

01:01:54 [UC0] that would be sequestered by the land. In comparison to the amount of carbon dioxide that would be saved by converting the land to solar Fields as well as proximity to in electric infrastructure.

01:02:09 [UC0] and the characteristics of the train terrain, rather. The suitability for installment of our solar panels,

01:02:19 [UC0] the study provides a helpful tool for state and local decision-makers regarding the benefits of citing solar projects on certain parcels.

01:02:28 [UC0] the report notes, the nuances in the relationship between developing some new solar infrastructure and environmental justice communities. In some cases development of solar infrastructure could result in cleaning up

01:02:43 [UC0] The parcel such as a brown field. But in other cases, it may result in loss of fair Green Space accordingly. It's vital that state and local agencies reviewing project proposals, evaluate

01:02:58 [UC0] Each application carefully and weigh the costs and benefits of a project with input from impacted communities.

01:03:06 [UC0] Finally, local government plays a vital role in the construction of solar infrastructure such as solar farms and solar parking canopies.

01:03:16 [UC0] The technical potential of solar study provides helpful information. Including GIS mapping which Municipal officials can use to evaluate permit applications one important way in which local zoning

01:03:31 [UC0] Oryx help to enable. The development of solar resources is by issuing special permits, which protect us, protect access to direct sunlight for solar panels. They also can provide exemptions for solar infrastructure

01:03:46 [UC0] From certain restrictions such as setbacks height restrictions and law coverage.

01:03:52 [UC0] These exemptions and special permits can help to Foster Equity by providing additional opportunities for development of programs such as Community solar

01:04:05 [UC0] I also wanted to talk a bit about public involvement.

01:04:09 [UC0] Am, I am I going over?

01:04:12 [UC0] I'm afraid.

01:04:13 [UC0] We're at time.

01:04:14 [UC0] Yeah, if you have any closing remarks, that would be terrific.

01:04:17 [UC0] Sorry for that.

01:04:19 [UC0] That's okay.

01:04:21 [UC0] Just just one wrap up for years conservation. Law Foundation is advocated and continues to advocate for the enhancement of public procedures, including expanding notice requirements for public proceedings.

01:04:35 [UC0] It's provision of translation and interpretation services use of understandable, or lay language for project, narratives and applications and adequate time, and scheduling. Good of procedural steps.

01:04:50 [UC0] We need to significantly for a pup development of solar energy and do so in a careful, with the careful and deliberate plan that takes into consideration.

01:04:59 [UC0] The needs of our most vulnerable residents or most valuable resources.

01:05:03 [UC0] We do have the skills to do so and the tools right here in Massachusetts and I believe that our clean Just Energy Future will soon become a reality.

01:05:13 [UC0] Thank you.

01:05:14 [UC0] Thank you Priya.

01:05:17 [UC0] So if you were very grateful for you and clf, for being here, of course. And we'll take questions when we do at the end of this great list of speakers.

01:05:26 [UC0] So if you're just joining, welcome your at the western Mass solar Forum. This is Forum. Number three, we're focused on Equity today. We've heard from three great speakers and are now going to hear from a fourth-grade speaker.

01:05:39 [UC0] And after we get to the end of this list around

01:05:43 [UC0] and one 30-ish, we will start to take your question. So don't be shy in the question-and-answer place on the attendee Hub.

01:05:53 [UC0] Thank you so much to the clean energy extension and for everyone who's made today possible. Okay.

01:06:00 [UC0] All right, friends, we're going to turn now to and thank you. Christine cray-cray go from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and we're going to, you know, thanks to Christine learn about the current status of solar

01:06:13 [UC0] Equity in the Commonwealth. Thanks Christine

01:06:20 [UC0] Great.

01:06:21 [UC0] thank you. It's thank you for the invitation.

01:06:23 [UC0] It's a pleasure to be here and be part of this forum.

01:06:26 [UC0] So today I'm going to offer just some quick insights from one of our research studies on income and racial disparities in financial returns from solar deployment. And here, our focus is really on the residential rooftop

01:06:42 [UC0] I'd like to acknowledge some of my co-authors in this work so M agree. Sure was a former student in the department of resource economics here at UMass and of course dr. Dre and Breger is director of the UMass, clean energy extension.

01:06:59 [UC0] Right.

01:06:59 [UC0] So as we've heard from the first two sessions of this forum solar power is really going to be important for a meeting, Massachusetts energy and climate goals. It's expected. That solar power will ramp up quickly.

01:07:13 [UC0] If we are to meet this almost 34 percent of electricity generation coming from solar by mid-century and ideally. We want these panels to be located on rooftop structures and degraded lands.

01:07:28 [UC0] So that of course makes residential rooftop solar a significant part of this dish are of solar in our energy Supply now currently less than 5% of Massachusetts

01:07:43 [UC0] Souls have solar panels on the roof. So although this is you know, you wish it were a greater number. There's also a silver lining here and that there's great potential for most for more households to install install solar on their rooftops

01:08:00 [UC0] Okay, so in this work, we look at solar that's already been installed and looked at the landscape of where the solar is installed and importantly, who are installing the solar panels in the state.

01:08:14 [UC0] The data that we use is from the srec program. So the srec to program, which included residential systems installed, between 2014, and 2018.

01:08:25 [UC0] So we have the precise location of these systems system.

01:08:30 [UC0] Ethics and whether the panels are leased or owned. And we combine this information with demographic information, from census block groups in the state.

01:08:40 [UC0] And also we have a financial model to calculate the net present value of each of these systems that accrue to the household.

01:08:50 [UC0] You just an overview of our methodology.

01:08:53 [UC0] So we use the financial model to calculate the net present value of each of the system. So taking into account when the system was installed, whether it's leased or own.

01:09:04 [UC0] So we assign that Financial return to each of those systems.

01:09:07 [UC0] And then we map them to the census block group where they belong and aggregate these Financial returns at the census Block Level.

01:09:17 [UC0] And then we perform statistical analysis.

01:09:20 [UC0] Don't look at the relationship between Financial returns and demographic characteristics of that census block group. I won't have time today to present, you know, some of those regression results.

01:09:31 [UC0] But our paper from this, research will be available to anyone interested.

01:09:35 [UC0] So for today, I just want to highlight four key points that came out of this study. So the first one is the difference between ownership and leasing options. Particularly when

01:09:50 [UC0] It comes to financial returns that are crude doer the household. So in the srec to program, you'll see here over seventy thousand households installed solar about 60 percent 4, percent of those households shows the leasing option.

01:10:05 [UC0] And 36% she was direct ownership and you'll see the figure on the right. It shows that in terms of the financial value, that accrues to the household ownership yields three times the financial return.

01:10:21 [UC0] Compared to leasing.

01:10:22 [UC0] So, in the ownership option, this is given certain parameters in 2019.

01:10:28 [UC0] The net present value is about 22 thousand dollars.

01:10:32 [UC0] If a household owns the system under the leasing option, the household obtains about you six thousand dollars of net, value Financial return.

01:10:43 [UC0] The remainder of the value of the solar is received by the third-party owner.

01:10:50 [UC0] So now I want to be clear that, you know, I think it's great that there's an ownership and leasing options households can self-select into which adoption type suits them best.

01:11:02 [UC0] But it's also important for us to realize that there is a quite a big big difference between the financial value that accrues to the household when they choose to lease our own. And just a note also that

01:11:17 [UC0] This has implications for localizing the benefits of solar adoption, and when the household owns the benefit State and State, if it's a leasing option, and the third party owner is not not a

01:11:32 [UC0] Company. But based in another state than that Financial value of leaves to sting,

01:11:39 [UC0] So, the second thing to note is that there's a fair amount of geographical disparity in terms of the financial returns. So the figure here, shows the financial returns at the census Block Level 4,

01:11:55 [UC0] The totality of the srec program and you can see that some of the areas are yellow, which means that the financial returns could be a small as just over \$1000 for that, duration of the program.

01:12:10 [UC0] and the bright red areas are those which received quite a bit of financial return from solar up to one point eight million dollars that have accrued to households in terms of Net Present Value

01:12:26 [UC0] Of their solar investment.

01:12:27 [UC0] I'm just quickly the table on the bottom.

01:12:32 [UC0] You can see that, lets say 2016, if we look at some of the value to their, there was a census block group that received \$500, another sensors, walk group received over 500 thousand dollars in that

01:12:50 [UC0] Okay. So the third point is that Financial returns are greater in census block groups that have higher median income. So this is perhaps not surprising that higher income households have

01:13:06 [UC0] Adopted solar higher income block groups, obtain \$6000. Greater Financial returns.

01:13:12 [UC0] compared to low income block groups. And this is a result coming from our statistical analysis, which you can see in the paper.

01:13:20 [UC0] see in the paper. And you can see in this figure, that if you look at the right figure, at around the median income in the state, eighty thousand dollars, the rate of installation actually decreases. And yet in the left figure, you can see that the financial

01:13:34 [UC0] turns are still increasing with respect to income. So this means that the ownership is really driving this increase in financial returns much more so than, than greater number of installations.

01:13:53 [UC0] The and then finally I got the result that we have in this financial returns are lower for minority groups. A 1% increase in Black share of the population is associated with a decrease in

01:14:09 [UC0] Sixteen thousand dollars in financial returns in a census block group.

01:14:13 [UC0] And this figure here shows that there is a disproportionate share of financial returns compared to population share.

01:14:21 [UC0] You can see here for whites. There is a higher share of financial return, compared to White share in the population. For all other racial groups, the share of financial return is slower

01:14:36 [UC0] Compared to their share in the population.

01:14:42 [UC0] These.

01:14:42 [UC0] So these findings point to a number of future directions for research and for not just academic research but for policy. So if we want Equitable adoption of solar and not just

01:14:58 [UC0] Access to solar but also access to the financial benefits of solar.

01:15:02 [UC0] We need better. Understanding of these mechanisms behind low uptake of solar in low-income and minority communities.

01:15:11 [UC0] Has already been pointed out and this forum renter status and suitable. Roofs are indeed important factors.

01:15:19 [UC0] But there could also be other barriers. Some Studies have shown that and at the national level even accounting for

01:15:27 [UC0] solar production potential on, roofs home ownership and income. There is still a racial bias when it comes to solar access, it is possible that familiarity with our trust into technology, could

01:15:42 [UC0] An issue low employment in the renewable energy sector for certain groups can also be barriers that need to be considered.

01:15:49 [UC0] So and in our own research here at UMass, we're looking at attitudes towards risk and delete Financial returns and how that affects homeowners decision to either lease or own solar, or to adopt

01:16:04 [UC0] Solar. And I just want to end with, you know, as we try to understand these mechanisms, we really do, you know, do you need community and stakeholder input in order to uncover remaining barriers in residential solar

01:16:19 [UC0] Adoption.

01:16:20 [UC0] So that's what I have.

01:16:23 [UC0] Thank you again and looking forward to questions and comments.

01:16:28 [UC0] Thank you so much. Christine, we're grateful for your research and thanks for the presentation friends up.

01:16:35 [UC0] Next is Nathan Phelps from votes solar and again we have a few more speakers and then we're going to take your questions.

01:16:43 [UC0] So please ask them in the Q&A. Thank you, Nathan.

01:16:47 [UC0] And we're going to turn it over to you now.

01:16:50 [UC0] Thank you so much.

01:16:51 [UC0] Thank you for having me here today.

01:16:53 [UC0] It's so great to see so many friends that I've known for many years now.

01:16:57 [UC0] And I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you.

01:17:00 [UC0] So, my name is Nathan Phelps. I'm the managing director of vote, solar regulatory, advocacy Hub, vote, solar. For those that don't know, we're a national nonprofit focused on realizing a just and

01:17:15 [UC0] Credible.

01:17:16 [UC0] Clean Energy Future.

01:17:19 [UC0] So there are many topics that I could actually talk to you about today and I'm happy to talk about whatever people would like to talk about.

01:17:27 [UC0] But for this discussion, I'm going to focus on something that I don't think is discussed quite enough and that is procedural. Justice specifically procedural Justice at the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities.

01:17:43 [UC0] I fear, we will never have a truly Equitable Energy System unless we actually address the embedded in equities that currently exist in Energy System, we should not expect the new policies alone can

01:17:58 [UC0] Eli's and Equitable Energy System.

01:18:01 [UC0] So before I dive too much into procedural, Justice, I just want to talk a little bit about regulation.

01:18:07 [UC0] Why, why do we need regulation? Why it's important specifically, why is regulation of investor owned utilities important in? The short answer is that investor owned utilities are monopolies.

01:18:21 [UC0] We do not have the ability to choose our electric utilities are utilities, are determined by our

01:18:28 [UC0] Our location.

01:18:29 [UC0] And as monopolies entities, we need Regulators to ensure that we the customers are not taking advantage of by investor-owned utilities.

01:18:39 [UC0] We need regulation because the interest of the investor owned, utilities, do not always aligned with the interests of customers and or Society.

01:18:51 [UC0] So, I want to be very clear that the Department of Public Utilities is a really important state agency. That does really

01:18:58 [UC0] important work.

01:19:00 [UC0] However, is not easy for members of the public to participate in proceedings at the dpu.

01:19:08 [UC0] We step back for a second.

01:19:09 [UC0] how many of you have ever heard of the dpu before today?

01:19:15 [UC0] Great.

01:19:15 [UC0] How many of you have provided comments to the Deep you?

01:19:21 [UC0] Wonderful.

01:19:21 [UC0] How many of you have testified?

01:19:26 [UC0] In front of the TPU.

01:19:28 [UC0] Okay, I'm seeing one hand.

01:19:30 [UC0] I'm not surprised that the numbers decreased. Every time I asked a question, the lack of participation at the GPU is a problem.

01:19:40 [UC0] It's difficult to find information about dockets at the GPU.

01:19:45 [UC0] if they dock, it is an adjudication that's just a fancy way of saying it's a contested proceeding then you likely need to hire a lawyer to participate in the preceding, you possibly need to hire an expert witness.

01:19:58 [UC0] Stu in short.

01:20:00 [UC0] It is not easy to participate in proceedings at the GPU.

01:20:03 [UC0] The process is historically. Exclusionary.

01:20:09 [UC0] There are numerous impediments to participating in front of the GPU, but two of the biggest impediments are time and money.



01:20:16 [UC0] However, the Z PV is where some of the most important decisions in solar policy in the Commonwealth are made.

01:20:21 [UC0] This is not just a theoretical issue. There are real-world impacts on the solar deployment in the Commonwealth and who benefits from solar these decisions often time are implemented, as a result of dpu

01:20:39 [UC0] But the communities that are most impacted by the energy system and our most vulnerable to high energy, burden are highly unlikely to be able to participate at the GPU.

01:20:50 [UC0] So let's think about that.

01:20:51 [UC0] the communities that could benefit the most from changes to the Energy System. Including solar adoption are also the least likely to have a voice at the DP you so the end result the frequent flyer set. The DP you.

01:21:06 [UC0] Are the regulated utilities that investor-owned utilities, the Attorney General's office, and a few other entities, including the low-income advocates.

01:21:17 [UC0] I happen to think that the Attorney General's office in Massachusetts is one of the best repair advocates in the country and low-income Advocates are also some of the best in the country but they don't have the time or resources to represent each

01:21:32 [UC0] Of our individual interests.

01:21:34 [UC0] What we need is more voices at the dpu.

01:21:40 [UC0] I actually think there's some irony to the situation, fundamentally the dpu and really all regulators.

01:21:47 [UC0] Our most capable of doing their job.

01:21:50 [UC0] when they have the best available information on which to base their decisions,

01:21:55 [UC0] but the process is so exclusionary that the dpu doesn't hear from enough of the communities impacted by potential decisions. As a result, the exclusionary process and the DP reduces the

01:22:11 [UC0] Out and quality of information that the DPR receives are by reducing the ability of the TPU to make decisions based on the best available information.

01:22:22 [UC0] Ultimately, the GPU and really by extension. The Commonwealth are best served by providing opportunities for more people to participate at the DP. You opening up the process to be more inclusive.

01:22:36 [UC0] I fully expect that the process is at the dpu. If it were more inclusive, the decisions at the DP, you would be better, informed and result in more Equitable outcomes, but that won't happen until there is procedural. Justice at the

01:22:51 [UC0] DP you to be clear. A procedural. Justice won't achieve Equity, it's really just the first step, but a lot more needs to happen before we really do achieve Equitable outcomes that the PPU and that includes Outreach and engagement

01:23:07 [UC0] Disadvantaged communities and building trust for the disadvantaged communities.

01:23:12 [UC0] If you're interested in learning more about how the process of the PPO could be more inclusive, the Attorney General's office, led a working group over the past couple of years. To look at this very issue. Happy to share that resulting Report with anyone that may

01:23:27 [UC0] Interested and while I didn't really explicitly talk about the energy facility, citing board. I will note that many of my comments are also applicable to the energy facility citing work. So thank you very much.

01:23:43 [UC0] Thank you, Nathan.

01:23:44 [UC0] Very, very much for those comments and I can imagine, we'll get some questions and some follow up for you in just a moment.

01:23:52 [UC0] Okay.

01:23:55 [UC0] friends we are now moving on to hear from Ernesto Crews. Also with Co-op power, really going to focus here on governance and public participation.

01:24:07 [UC0] So thank you so much arnesto for being here with us and for your comments will turn.

01:24:13 [UC0] It over to you.

01:24:15 [UC0] Thank you for having me.

01:24:17 [UC0] Great to be here.

01:24:18 [UC0] Thanks to the organizers.

01:24:19 [UC0] UMass legislators is, this is a really great event and I'll keep it brief in order to get to the questions.

01:24:28 [UC0] Yes.

01:24:31 [UC0] Well, we welcome your comments.

01:24:33 [UC0] We have about, you've about every speaker has about 10 minutes.

01:24:36 [UC0] That's this, you know, it an inadequate amount of time but that's how we're. That's how we're getting to hear from lots of good people, we gonna make it happen.

01:24:44 [UC0] Thank you so much.

01:24:45 [UC0] Okay, so we just going to talk broad about what it means to have solar equity in terms of governance and participation.

01:24:56 [UC0] Starting off introduction solar Equity, repairs to the fur, to the fair and Justice tribution of the benefits and burdens of solar energy development.

01:25:04 [UC0] and ensures that all communities, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Have access to the benefits of solar energy.

01:25:14 [UC0] And so moving on, it's not just about education, education, can be patronizing to a family who was an expert at what they do in their own personal lives.

01:25:27 [UC0] This is more about an information exchange, everybody's an expert in their own lives. Everybody knows what they're doing.

01:25:34 [UC0] We have a lot of Professionals in the world and we should talk to people as such. We're not educating them or we're not Mission. We are here to have information exchange about what the benefits are of solar.

01:25:44 [UC0] From a community standpoint.

01:25:48 [UC0] Now, the importance of governance is that ensures that policies and practices are in place to promote inclusivity and ensures. That solar energy development is carried out in a manner that benefits everyone without causing harm to any particular community and things we

01:26:03 [UC0] Go into detail with these are things that we all know what's what does good governance look like is transparency and accountability is having a rule of law participation.

01:26:13 [UC0] So all stakeholders at the table responsiveness responding to people in a way that makes it feel supported and builds trust and is consensus orienting.

01:26:23 [UC0] So everyone feels like, we're moving in a positive direction together.

01:26:27 [UC0] We want to make sure that people have inclusiveness things are efficient. We want to have a strategic vision.

01:26:33 [UC0] People buy into Vision, they need to know what the bigger plan is

and that we should put that first.

01:26:39 [UC0] Why are we doing this?

01:26:39 [UC0] How does this benefit everyone ethical conduct when we're working with communities, especially marginalized communities.

01:26:47 [UC0] Anytime that there's unethical conduct we really set ourselves back for a very long time in terms of getting people back out.

01:26:54 [UC0] So if we have to hold ourselves to a higher standard, we should do that because climate is more important than any one of us, right?

01:27:03 [UC0] And we want to just talk with have continuous Improvement.

01:27:06 [UC0] Public participation is crucial for achieving solar equity and ensures that the voices of all stakeholders. Especially those marginalized communities are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

01:27:16 [UC0] We want to make sure that we're bringing them early.

01:27:19 [UC0] So how do we do that awareness campaigns Community, workshops, stakeholder engagement incentive programs, right?

01:27:26 [UC0] We don't want to just incentivize and give people discounts ownership is what matters?

01:27:32 [UC0] Having agency in the process is what matters because people take care of what they consider to be their own.

01:27:37 [UC0] So we want to make sure that we're not just offering discounts.

01:27:40 [UC0] We are making people part of a process because this is there this is their energy.

01:27:46 [UC0] Accessible information having feedback mechanisms.

01:27:50 [UC0] So constantly being communication with with community members, important and then collaborative decision-making. Having any sort of participatory process when it comes to decision, making is important for this and that means working together.

01:28:03 [UC0] And I think that the one thing that we don't really talk about is not just consent from the community but informed consent do people really know how things work to the extent that they can make a good value judgement.

01:28:16 [UC0] That's what they're reading engaged in relative to Solar Development at the community level.

01:28:20 [UC0] That is a very difficult thing to do for all sides.

01:28:23 [UC0] However, one thing that we do know is that we don't necessarily need to complicate things. And I think the challenge is to inform, consent are a lack of transparency and project details, not always because

01:28:38 [UC0] Folks want to hide or obscure, but rather because things are so complicated.

01:28:41 [UC0] We leave things out complex, technical jargon the interval, things get intellectualized because of this marketization of everything, everything has to be monetizing and there's a financial.

01:28:55 [UC0] We can be played and I think that that's a sport that wealthy could engage in book for your practical everyday person.

01:29:01 [UC0] that's not a sport, they want to engage, you know, the debates, the negotiations. That might be fun too.

01:29:07 [UC0] Us. But to a person who's struggling they don't care about you know us playing that sport limited access to information especially in remote areas, that's a challenge and then mistrust between communities and Developers.

01:29:20 [UC0] Developers are playing sport. Communities are trying to live and we've got to bridge that Gap. Somehow

01:29:26 [UC0] And so some solutions to this are simplify the technical information and present it in a user-friendly Manner.

01:29:32 [UC0] And that could be done when it comes to electricity systems.

01:29:38 [UC0] What you see in your house is what you see in your car radio is what you see in the grid.

01:29:43 [UC0] And when we overcomplicate things because of the money, it makes it really hard to explain things and playing speak. But really if we can keep it simple. That's, you know, it's like Einstein said, if you can't explain it simply you don't know well enough.

01:29:59 [UC0] You know, taking this for out of it and really getting to practical terms is important.

01:30:03 [UC0] Providing easy access to project details through online platforms and then building trust through transparency and open communication are really important and organizing the community constantly keeping them engaged to the solution and we just need those on-ramps to

01:30:18 [UC0] Making so, for Meaningful public, participation Community should have Avenues or on-ramps to be part of this decision making process. So, we should be thinking about that upfront.

01:30:27 [UC0] How can we make it easy to vote?

01:30:28 [UC0] How can we make it easy to access information right now? It's all about user interface whether it be apps websites, or, you know, even if it's in person having a person there with tablet, going through the information slowly

01:30:44 [UC0] And in simple plain speak is critical to having those on-ramps to decision making, they don't necessarily need to know all the details, but they need to know the spirit that just just so the implications of those details

01:30:59 [UC0] Are lies and that's something that we can all do. And I will leave it at that. I look forward to the question and answer section.

01:31:09 [UC0] Thank you so much for this.

01:31:12 [UC0] I think it's a great call to action for us in terms of how we how we really see people power manifest in the way it can and should appreciate you.

Friends were going to move now to carry Bowie

01:31:28 [UC0] From browning the green space and we're so grateful that you're here Carrie.

01:31:35 [UC0] Wait, I'm happy to be here and thanks as well to the organizers for having me here and hopefully you can see my screen and I will I'll get going.

01:31:46 [UC0] We can see it.

01:31:47 [UC0] it? Okay, cool. So, in terms of me, for those of you who don't know me, I've been in the clean energy space for a number of years. Now, since my friend Dwayne breger, owns, I met him when before there was a

01:32:03 [UC0] That's when there was a division of energy resources, but I'm from a Frontline or fence line community in Alabama, I worked in semiconductor manufacturing and environmental safety involved, but I also worked in state government above energy

01:32:18 [UC0] Not in all Affairs. Under governor Patrick and at Department of Environmental Protection under both governor, Patrick and Governor Baker.

01:32:28 [UC0] So, I've gotten to see a broad range of different things. And what I saw in sort of two Ernesto's piece, there was a piece where

01:32:39 [UC0] I saw this triangle of a sort of government Community organizations and project proponents and most of the time they would speak to us in government.

01:32:47 [UC0] I didn't see them talking as much to each other.

01:32:50 [UC0] And so when I got out sort of pull that together, but the color of wealth report came out in 2015 from the Federal Reserve Bank and what it did for me, I was doing some other things, but I realized that, you know, the racial wealth Gap,

01:33:05 [UC0] You know, we have the high has wealth Gap in the country in Boston between white families, and black families for well, but also climate change provided a unique opportunity

01:33:20 [UC0] Ready to tackle both of those in once. And so overall, you know, we saw the challenge in careers company's Capital contracts and communities. I won't read through all of that, I've got a bunch of slides and only 10 minutes.

01:33:34 [UC0] So I'm just trying to give sort of a primer or primer of sorts but our vision overall is adjust energy transition and our mission is threefold. We want to create jobs, build wealth, and reduce energy burden,

01:33:51 [UC0] The engineering me believes in a sort of systems approach.

01:33:55 [UC0] So we think we're an environmental justice organization, but we're really focused on economic Justice and social justice as well.

01:34:03 [UC0] You asked us to talk a little bit about Workforce but we think you can't talk about Workforce without talking about business development because small businesses, or the people who create jobs and we also think there's Community side

01:34:18 [UC0] The energy burden side because we think that companies that are employed people of color and people who speak the language. In these communities, you have greater adoption adoption in those communities.

01:34:32 [UC0] We're base here, started in Boston, but we are more of a regional organization.

01:34:37 [UC0] I'm actually a New York now at New York climate week, so we see ourselves as working, regionally, but Boston and Gateway cities is what we're targeting.

01:34:48 [UC0] Dean, but we could see being larger at some point. Our value prop is really in convening or across all those different organizations or groups that I talked about identifying and filling gaps

01:35:03 [UC0] Building Bridges.

01:35:04 [UC0] You know this shows some of the program's I won't go through all of them but maybe in the Workforce Development piece I will highlight some in the careers and Company side so we've helped with a targeted internship

01:35:19 [UC0] Program, we did the pilot a few years ago with the mass clean energy center my good friend to me, Kojak's, who I think is that admin grid? Now, I remember when I was at Mass d p, as a commissioner I actually have a couple degrees from MIT but I said it can't be.

01:35:34 [UC0] All young white guys. Remember it? Getting internships through this program.

01:35:39 [UC0] this is taxpayer dollars it should look like the Commonwealth and so took a long time but we started that program and we've been doing that for three years now to focus on getting more black and brown people.

01:35:53 [UC0] Those internships we were doing suffered Exodus around the offshore wind space and there are others that you know, I can go through later.

01:36:05 [UC0] When too fast.

01:36:06 [UC0] All right, here we go.

01:36:08 [UC0] So, in terms of equity, this is just talking about some of the work force things that we've done.

01:36:13 [UC0] And I know this is a busy slide so I won't spend a lot of time here.

But just saying, you know, there are a number of different things that you know, we've been doing trying to work with different organizations, targeting different groups of people

01:36:28 [UC0] Different types of trainings. Through all of these different programs, there's mentoring. And there's also on the opposite side of careers.

01:36:36 [UC0] I talked about companies while we're creating Pathways to employment.

01:36:40 [UC0] We also need to be removing barriers to employment.

01:36:42 [UC0] So, how do we think about unconscious bias, and things that companies, because it does no good to get black and brown people into companies and then they don't feel welcome because then they're going to leave and it doesn't work. So we're trying to work on that piece as well.

01:36:57 [UC0] So here's just three programs that we're actually just received some funding from Mass clean energy center for.

01:37:05 [UC0] We try to partner that's the other piece were relatively lean and so we don't want to do work that others are doing and we want to amplify the good work that's going on.

01:37:14 [UC0] So the first one block power civilian climate core, we actually have funding to work on returning, citizens. So how can we train them? This is a

01:37:27 [UC0] little bit more in the built environment space.

01:37:30 [UC0] But I know this is a solar Forum but this can lead into the solar space as well.

01:37:35 [UC0] We've got a program with trimco where we're targeting the students at the Madison Park Vocational, Technical High School and we also have a partnership with action for equity and others where we're looking at training in the workforce space.

01:37:52 [UC0] We actually talked about wind. And so there is a piece at the front end, but we're also, you know, I talked about internship programs and we talked about apprenticeship programs and they were super important.

01:38:05 [UC0] But we also looking at sort of post grad programs. So X Academy Exodus is a firm out of Aberdeen Scotland. They have been doing this over in Europe and so we partner with in the

01:38:20 [UC0] NG this program here and so think about hey can someone do a two-year degree at a Franklin? Common is that and then let's do two years of on-the-job training to be specialized.

01:38:32 [UC0] So we're working on those types of work for it to pieces. And then this is that targeted internship program.

01:38:38 [UC0] That I talked about. So, we're in our third year of that and you can see bringing in folk.

01:38:44 [UC0] But also, like I said, working with the companies that help them understand how to work with students,

01:38:50 [UC0] Of color, if they have not done that before.

01:38:53 [UC0] So, in more of a general context, I think, you know, there's some things that we've been working with the companies around is sort of recruitment retention promotion, you know, on Simple Things, how do you craft your job

01:39:08 [UC0] They're not running people away.

01:39:10 [UC0] How do you think about your company policies and culture?

01:39:14 [UC0] Now this is really high level but just wanting to say these different types of things that we look at, in terms of our bgs Coalition membership, we try to do this as well, we try to connect support and educate, you

01:39:29 [UC0] So people, you know, on out there on an island and it's different, we work with a lot of different companies but the big piece around the membership is really around getting people to sign on to a pledge.

01:39:42 [UC0] We, you know, unfortunately there is a lot of greenwashing going on in the world and so we don't want to be, you know, sort of stamping or getting behind folk will meet you where you are, you know what people are different

01:39:57 [UC0] Points along their Journey but we want everybody moving in the same direction and that's why we do it really to get this pledge and to do tracking but we do workshops, we have a toolkit. So we're really just trying to help people as they go around this

01:40:12 [UC0] So not only have a few more minutes, so let me see if I can wrap up this shows, you know, sort of our Coalition membership.

01:40:20 [UC0] The biggest piece out of this is we have people from everywhere for profit, nonprofit Academia Venture Capital rule, quasi agencies and the Great Piece of this is we get to hear from a lot of different people about a lot of different things

01:40:35 [UC0] Last.

01:40:36 [UC0] Lastly, this is our board and this is sort of how we came together.

01:40:41 [UC0] That top row is Dan, was at the Northeast clean, energy Council on the board.

01:40:49 [UC0] And we know I reached out and said, hey, we need to Brown to Green Space and, you know, they came and I said, well, we need women involved.

01:40:57 [UC0] So, Jackie was up to New England, women and energy, and environment, and Amanda was at the American Association of blacks and energy, and we brought on the others,

01:41:05 [UC0] In the space. And as we think about solar, no, see Eric is on our board from Blue Wave solar.

01:41:11 [UC0] And we definitely have others who are involved.

01:41:14 [UC0] We have Focus area, committees, that I talked about from different people along the way as well.

01:41:21 [UC0] We've got some auxiliary committees focusing on some different pieces and then we've got a pretty lean team, but Alicia herenton from a Workforce perspective, she's our deputy director Workforce Development, so,

01:41:35 [UC0] The programs that I told you about she's been leading most of that work and that is it happy to answer any questions that you have and, you know, info, a brown and the Green Space

01:41:50 [UC0] Org is an email and you can get Alicia at Alicia Brown in the Green Space outdoor.

01:41:56 [UC0] Get to me at carry kar-wai at Browning a green space shuttle. So I will stop sharing now.

01:42:03 [UC0] Hopefully that was helpful.

01:42:04 [UC0] It was helpful.

01:42:06 [UC0] Thank you.

01:42:07 [UC0] really appreciate the presentation and all your work. So John Lynn, Priya, Christine, Nathan, Ernesto, and Carrie. Thank you so much for for

01:42:19 [UC0] this really leading off the first half of today and I thanks also to the all the sub moderators who are collecting questions for you and there's now numbers of good questions, including one for me,

01:42:35 [UC0] Which I will answer.

01:42:35 [UC0] But first, this is a question for all the panelists and perhaps, you

know, anyone can answer and perhaps you can popcorn out some good ideas and answers, like, from your perspective, what do you think the largest?

01:42:51 [UC0] Airy or is to achieving greater solar Equity adoption and its benefits in the Commonwealth.

01:42:58 [UC0] So if you had to say the largest problem, the thing that we should tackle, what would it be? And anyone can go first

01:43:12 [UC0] You go ahead and I'll jump.

01:43:15 [UC0] and then carry. Sorry, Carrie, I apologized.

01:43:20 [UC0] I'm going to say money and that maybe like a really this overly simplistic answer. But what we really need to do is actually start getting solar to the most vulnerable communities at no

01:43:35 [UC0] I asked to them and that requires money.

01:43:40 [UC0] So so I definitely agree on money but even I would say maybe before money I think there is a sort of Education piece and an awareness. I think there is a unfortunately an information asymmetry, you know, I think so like arnesto was

01:43:56 [UC0] Talking a little bit about it. I think most people just don't know how this stuff works.

01:44:00 [UC0] And so even if there are buckets of money, if they don't know that the money is there, and they can access it, then, it doesn't doesn't work. So, I think it's linked together, but I think that there's just got to be better.

01:44:13 [UC0] Education, Outreach awareness about, you know, all of these programs.

01:44:22 [UC0] Thank you. And I see Priya and then Lynn.

01:44:28 [UC0] Score definitely Echo. What Nathan and Kerry said and I would add nimbyism to that list as well. Certainly for people who

01:44:43 [UC0] I would like to have solar on their own homes, financing and education are huge barriers but we're definitely going to need more solar than just rooftop solar in order to

01:44:58 [UC0] T of our climate goals.

01:44:58 [UC0] and so we will need to be constructing solar farms and solar fields and that will take up land. And unfortunately, there are people who push back against the

01:45:14 [UC0] The installation of new infrastructure in places where they deem it to be an aesthetic.

01:45:24 [UC0] Hurdle for them just because, you know, they don't want to see that.

01:45:30 [UC0] And of course, you know, I believe that natural resources should be preserved and conserved, but it's about dancing act between figuring out. What resources are the most valuable

01:45:45 [UC0] Resources and are providing critical habitat and critical functions. And what resources, you know, can be potentially better used and might make good space for

01:45:59 [UC0] solar and not allowing the aesthetic features of solar to be a characteristic that gets pushed into environmental justice communities and already

01:46:14 [UC0] Urbanized in and developed areas where there's already a lack of space.

01:46:24 [UC0] Thanks, Priya Lynn. And then Christine

01:46:32 [UC0] you're on mute Lynn.

01:46:36 [UC0] We need to change how we think. We've got the market, think we've got the charity think, and then there's a Commons thing.

01:46:48 [UC0] And if we're relying on the market to solve these problems, it we're



going to fail. And if we're relying on charity, that is so disenfranchising to  
01:47:01 [UC0] and I think we need to move toward looking at ourselves and looking  
at the common, good for our Commonwealth and giving Frontline communities and  
low-income people, people of color,  
01:47:16 [UC0] Honored seat at the table. As experts is Ernesto a saying in their  
lives and what's important for them. For their communities.  
01:47:25 [UC0] Along with everybody else to really look at what restorative justice  
looks like. And to think about ourselves as a commonwealth looking for the common.  
Good for everybody in our communities.  
01:47:38 [UC0] And if we change that way of thinking, then we'll start doing the  
right things sharing information, including  
01:47:45 [UC0] People in governance and making good decisions together our  
partners, rest Coupe in Europe.  
01:47:54 [UC0] There are a whole network of cooperatives and every nation state in  
the European Union, and they just go Community by Community by Community, replace  
all the fossil fuel infrastructure.  
01:48:05 [UC0] Build, Renewables that are owned by people in the community.  
01:48:09 [UC0] I think we need that kind of comprehensive planning process and  
implementation process. We know how to  
01:48:15 [UC0] to do it.  
01:48:16 [UC0] It's not hard. And we can solve these problems together, which  
thinking about it, the right way.  
01:48:25 [UC0] Thank you, Christine, and then Ernesto.  
01:48:30 [UC0] Add to these factors time and mindshare.  
01:48:34 [UC0] So when we think about decision, making for these people who are  
pressed for time have different pressing concerns in their lives, sometimes energy,  
you know, takes a back seat and is low priority.  
01:48:46 [UC0] So thinking about how to get these people's attention, so that with  
the money on the table, they can take the time to participate in the outreach  
program, or to really learn about this. Technology will also go.  
01:49:00 [UC0] Go a long way towards getting their participation.  
01:49:03 [UC0] if actually, we can get them to pay attention and and have the  
latitude to think about energy issues.  
01:49:12 [UC0] Thanks, Christine Ernesto. And then Carrie.  
01:49:17 [UC0] I think the biggest issue is culture so like what are collected  
based, what are we working towards?  
01:49:21 [UC0] Our narratives are usually fear-based and charity based. So, it's  
like these, these beliefs that were saving, someone will wear the planet, or  
whatever. It's not people to People's day-to-day lives, they guess it's good.  
01:49:36 [UC0] it sort of works for the wire, but when you're looking to expand  
outside of the existing sphere of influence that we as people who care and we're  
giving these movements and in government and where the wheels of  
01:49:53 [UC0] Above you do community work, it really comes out to delivering on a  
better Vision.  
01:49:57 [UC0] Like what's our vision?  
01:49:58 [UC0] Why are we doing this?  
01:49:59 [UC0] Why doesn't expensive needs to be practical and easy?  
01:50:02 [UC0] Be something exciting.  
01:50:03 [UC0] You know people don't get excited about being a social justice.  
01:50:09 [UC0] Victim forever, you know, like the things like that, like that

Narrative of victimization that we can't do or that whatever it is.

01:50:15 [UC0] It's not going to help us move forward.

01:50:17 [UC0] What helps us going forward? Is having ejected honest.

01:50:20 [UC0] Look at where we're at and like what's the best possible thing we can do right now and working that I find that like on the doors or talking to community members that way more compelling than being told what to say at a here hoping at some days

01:50:35 [UC0] Is this what we want? So that think

01:50:40 [UC0] Thanks Ernesto.

01:50:41 [UC0] Carrie, let's give you the last word and then we'll move on to another question.

01:50:46 [UC0] Yeah, I'm just following up on what someone just said as well as Ernesto on the theater piece.

01:50:50 [UC0] I'll just go back to my original point about information asymmetry.

01:50:54 [UC0] I think information. Asymmetry is two, things is not having information, but it's also getting this information. And one of the areas, especially from solar, in a number of our communities, is on the market side, we've got people almost like used car sales people.

01:51:10 [UC0] You know going and you know, selling solar and people, you know, getting sort of caught up in arrears because they're giving him bad deals because of that lack of information.

01:51:20 [UC0] But now they're getting bad information and so we've got to do something about that as well, so I'll leave it at that.

01:51:28 [UC0] Thanks Gary.

01:51:29 [UC0] Another question for the entire group, for those of you who want to jump in.

01:51:36 [UC0] The question is, how can Municipal leaders and others use planning tools and Community Values to ensure how solar is built and ensure that it is built equitably.

01:51:53 [UC0] How to how to community, folks, use these tools.

01:51:59 [UC0] I think one great example is the technical potential of solar study that I mentioned can be found on the website for the Massachusetts Department of energy resources.

01:52:11 [UC0] It's a really great study that includes GIS mapping as a as a feature of it, so similar to the way. So, for example, I served on my hometown Framingham is Conservation Commission

01:52:26 [UC0] Years.

01:52:26 [UC0] and we would use GIS mapping to look at wetlands and determine Wetland boundaries things like that, similar to the way in which GIS mapping is used to look at Wetlands or look at

01:52:42 [UC0] Property mapping, this feature can be used to look at the biodiversity of a particular area. The terrain can also kind of overlay with

01:52:57 [UC0] Wetlands resources and things like that, although I believe that the they do just filter out what ones? Because you can't build a solar panel.

01:53:06 [UC0] I can pull this little solar field on a on a wetland anyway, but it's a great tool and I would highly suggest that any Municipal Employees or staff on on this call.

01:53:19 [UC0] check it out, especially if you if you already are familiar with GIS software.

01:53:26 [UC0] But that's, that's my plug for that.

01:53:28 [UC0] And that I think it's a great.  
01:53:33 [UC0] A great feature of the of the report.  
01:53:36 [UC0] Thank you.  
01:53:38 [UC0] Yeah. And for folks who so thank you Priya and the they'll be I think it's Forum one.  
01:53:45 [UC0] There's a nice explanation of that as well.  
01:53:47 [UC0] So it's great to refer folks back.  
01:53:49 [UC0] So thank you so much Lynn. I see your hand.  
01:53:55 [UC0] If you could unmute.  
01:53:59 [UC0] Talking with, and they PC and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission about putting out a request for quotes. So, that municipalities don't have to go through a really arduous  
01:54:14 [UC0] Procurement process in order.  
01:54:16 [UC0] So that there's a one or three or five companies that they can sign up with that will do a survey of all their properties, figure out how much solar they can develop.  
01:54:31 [UC0] Up and then be co-developer with them in figuring out how they can own those solar arrays to benefit their residents. And I think such a thing is possible and I'd love to see that available to communities.  
01:54:48 [UC0] Thank you so much, Lynn.  
01:54:49 [UC0] Anybody else when it field, this one.  
01:54:53 [UC0] Okay, we're going to go to Nathan.  
01:54:56 [UC0] a question for you, Nathan.  
01:54:59 [UC0] And this is a phrase like this and we can see where this goes, but our utilities like eversource likely to become the new intermediary for Community solar subscription billing instead of private players.  
01:55:13 [UC0] And then, the participant goes on to say, what is the Outlook with various proposals before the dpu currently for how this Market might've?  
01:55:23 [UC0] Evolve.  
01:55:26 [UC0] So a lot of personal opinion alerts before I answer this question, I think it is unlikely that the investor owned utilities will become the intermediaries for  
01:55:41 [UC0] Are crediting on people's electric bills from Community, solar in the near future.  
01:55:47 [UC0] There may be some exceptions to that.  
01:55:49 [UC0] So, for instance, eversource does have a proposal on the table for doing low-income solar and they would administer that program.  
01:56:02 [UC0] So for instance, customers that are on the R2 or are for low-income discount rate may receive community. So  
01:56:09 [UC0] Solar credits from ever Soros specifically, from a never source of Minister program. So there may be some exceptions but by and large, I do not foresee the electric utility is being the Arbiters of  
01:56:25 [UC0] How can we sort of credits are allocated?  
01:56:29 [UC0] Okay, helpful.  
01:56:30 [UC0] Thank you.  
01:56:31 [UC0] And thanks to the person who asked the questions.  
01:56:34 [UC0] I'm going to go to John. Now, with a direct question and this John, this is about the smart program.  
01:56:41 [UC0] So the participant asks, how does the smart program ensure that low-income customers are actually being enrolled?

01:56:48 [UC0] How does community solar integrate with discounts customers are receiving?

01:56:55 [UC0] What is the outlook for new project development in western Mass given current smart incentives and that's a three parter

01:57:09 [UC0] And perhaps John is no longer. We knew John was in transit.

01:57:13 [UC0] It's possible. He's he's here. Is it looks like he might be here but his photos not on.

01:57:19 [UC0] let's go. Thanks Mary.

01:57:23 [UC0] But is muted. John if you're here, you can respond.

01:57:35 [UC0] Okay, we'll Circle back to John.

01:57:39 [UC0] You know. We all know what airport Wi-Fi is like.

01:57:43 [UC0] So I'm going to go to Lynn Lynn Land used concerns came up for a lot of attendees, right?

01:57:50 [UC0] They've come up and past forms as well as you know. So how can municipalities in the state? Play a bigger role in factoring in the human and environmental costs of clear? Cutting trees for solar installations.

01:58:10 [UC0] Your, I'm sorry.

01:58:12 [UC0] you're muted again.

01:58:15 [UC0] Go out some overseas. Spent a lot of time in large, forums, debating these issues and where we've come down is that communities should have the right to self-govern to make these decisions in the ways Ernesto is talking

01:58:30 [UC0] That themselves rather than having solar developers from out of that Community making those decisions.

01:58:40 [UC0] And so every Community has a tremendous amount of renewable energy, you know, Lessing them every day and it's question of how do we balance the needs of the

01:58:55 [UC0] Community and the resources that community and not to look at it as an individual Community thing.

01:59:01 [UC0] But also to have Regional discussions with our neighbors about where in our backyard are we going to put the renewable energy that we need on? There are vast parking lots and rooftops that are available

01:59:16 [UC0] It Co-op power, we have certain limits, we only build on marginal land. We wouldn't participate in just deforesting and we think the problem can be solved in, needs to be solved in ways that aren't compromising the environment.

01:59:33 [UC0] Thanks for leading that awful in. Do other panelists want to respond.

01:59:41 [UC0] I see a hand out walking respond on that and I don't know all the details, but you know, when I was at the state, I was a director Brown feels in addition to environmental justice.

01:59:52 [UC0] And so, I would say first, you know, you know, like Linda was saying, let's use all the marginal land first.

01:59:59 [UC0] you know, solar on Brown fills Soul or own own own, landfills own the whole landfills less use state-owned land, you know.

02:00:09 [UC0] You know, Department of Transportation or other space first.

02:00:14 [UC0] So let's do that first.

02:00:16 [UC0] And I think that goes back to that planning question is, you know, just understanding what's available and how do you use it and sort of start there first?

02:00:29 [UC0] Thanks Kerry, Priya.

02:00:31 [UC0] I see your hand up, but in fact, there is a question directed to

you, you know?

02:00:36 [UC0] Can roll it all into one.

02:00:37 [UC0] So folks wanted to know what specific actions clf is doing to advance solar Equity.

02:00:47 [UC0] So you know what is the what is the kind of work that you're undertaking in the actions you're undertaking?

02:00:55 [UC0] Score. So first, I'll just address the previous matter which just wanted to note that, I totally agree that we should work to as much as

02:01:10 [UC0] Possible limit any damage or Consequences to the natural environment when it comes to building solar 100% support trying to build out as much parking lot.

02:01:25 [UC0] Going to be space and rooftop solar space as possible.

02:01:28 [UC0] But also recognize that it's much more expensive to build solar canopy over a parking lot or, or a solar Roof, then it is to build out solar grandmother solar.

02:01:44 [UC0] um and so just wanted to make the point that when it comes to installing ground mounted solar, we shouldn't automatically assume that solar needs to go into the

02:01:59 [UC0] Did industrialized areas because oftentimes those are all are already the most burdened areas.

02:02:04 [UC0] And so making sure that the communities that are already burdened with significant amounts of industry in development who are already lacking access to Green spaces aren't losing, what little

02:02:19 [UC0] They do have to solar and that, you know, sometimes sacrifices might need to be made in order to of fields of not or something like that in order to build.

02:02:35 [UC0] Build solar with regards to CLS work on solar and Equity clf does advocacy myself myself. In particular, does advocacy before the Department of Public Utilities.

02:02:51 [UC0] qualities and works with the state agencies and utilities sometimes in concert with sometimes

02:03:05 [UC0] It and prodding opposition to in order to help Advance our clean energy goals.

02:03:16 [UC0] We work to help rapidly, dirt, decarbonized, the building transportation and electric sectors.

02:03:26 [UC0] And Massachusetts in particular, with regards to equity, we've been heavily involved in proceeding at the department of public.

02:03:34 [UC0] Public Utilities docketed at docket number.

02:03:39 [UC0] Twenty one fifty, which is the Department's investigation into its own proceedings and essentially the Department's efforts to enhance public procedures and the Public's awareness of

02:03:55 [UC0] Department proceedings.

02:03:57 [UC0] So in those dockets in that docket we've provided input and comments as to how the department can make its proceedings, more accessible to the Massachusetts.

02:04:12 [UC0] community at large, including translation interpretation Services better Public Notices where meetings are held how meetings are held

02:04:28 [UC0] Look, Etc.

02:04:29 [UC0] So hoping that with more input from the public and more more frequent and better input from the public will be able to develop more equitably.

02:04:42 [UC0] Thanks, Priya, we appreciate this. Friends were coming to the end of this first block of speakers.

02:04:49 [UC0] I want to draw your attention to the chat first Zara, put in this technical potential of solar study and then also Nathan from vote. Solar has this report from the AG. Oh I'm just a little public service.

02:05:04 [UC0] Announcement.

02:05:05 [UC0] We're going to hear from the Attorney General's office in the second block.

02:05:09 [UC0] So you know, please do come back.

02:05:12 [UC0] We're about to take a 15-minute break but I want to address a question that came to me directly which is basically, why is the state subsidy or incentivization of solar anemic was the word that was used

02:05:27 [UC0] Stand.

02:05:28 [UC0] So, I what I want to say is, you know, I'm very much appreciative of this new Administration that's come in very quickly and established both a pretty fabulous group of leaders in Secretary Tepper, and

02:05:43 [UC0] Chief Hoffer and all of their colleagues.

02:05:46 [UC0] And you know I think we all know that the the road to getting to a NetZero Commonwealth is going to have a lot of components including solar and including incentivization of solar and you know we have to

02:06:01 [UC0] At the built environment, we have to figure out Transportation.

02:06:04 [UC0] All of these things have to factor in and they all need State money, frankly, and they all need Federal money. So I have hope that the hilly Driscoll Administration is going to increase a focus on actually

02:06:19 [UC0] The plans that are before them and creating new plans with your advocacy.

02:06:24 [UC0] And that's why forums like this are really, really important.

02:06:27 [UC0] I will also just draw our attention to the fact that there will be a climate Bond Bill coming up and that'll be a great opportunity for us. We don't have a date for this but we know that it'll be coming and that will be a great opportunity for us

02:06:42 [UC0] help direct where we would like more investment in this green energy sector in reducing, emissions sequestering carbon, all of the pieces of the puzzle of getting to 2050 or even before

02:06:58 [UC0] And of course, you know, the governor, you know, within her first 100 days established a green bank which you know I think many of us are very excited about and that was a quick action.

02:07:11 [UC0] She took to help generate Capital.

02:07:13 [UC0] so there's more on that but I don't want to eat into your brake but please hit me up directly and we can talk more and because I appreciate the fact that the state has to throw down, you know, put our money where our shared values are and we'll do that.

02:07:28 [UC0] With your help and many of you are my constituents.

02:07:30 [UC0] So so friends, we're going to see you back at 2:00 but first, I'm going to tell you who's coming.

02:07:37 [UC0] So we have Maria, marasco from Cape and Vineyard electric. We have Samantha Hamilton from Live.

02:07:44 [UC0] Well Springfield, we have Richard come from UMass five, Chris Chris modish from the Massachusetts agios office, Joanna, Jo Ann, buceta from doar, Green communities program. I love

02:07:58 [UC0] Of and more.

02:08:00 [UC0] So come back at 2:00 and thank you to our beautiful group of panelists.

02:08:04 [UC0] Who did this first two hours.

02:08:06 [UC0] We'll see you for one more hour at 2:00.

02:20:35 [UC0] Alright, friends, we are back.

02:20:37 [UC0] It is 2:00 p.m.

02:20:38 [UC0] out in Western Massachusetts which is where I am.

02:20:41 [UC0] So we're going to get started and we're really lucky.

02:20:48 [UC0] I'm just waiting for cameras to come back on.

02:20:50 [UC0] on. Thank you too Laurie and Elizabeth who are offering ASL interpretation this is a plug to please check out the attendee Hub that's for speaker bios.

02:21:02 [UC0] Those and presentation materials and a pretty detailed agenda.

02:21:06 [UC0] So we are going to start off this second or third hour. Rather it's not the second hour, the third hour within the same format we're going to hear from a group of speakers and then we're going to take your questions and

02:21:21 [UC0] Men's, I know we're not able to get to all of them, we recognize that and thank you to the clean energy extension, for aggregating responses to these. So that, you know, as a as an accountability mechanism

02:21:36 [UC0] This forum and also as a fueling for the second Forum that the clean energy extension hopes to do.

02:21:43 [UC0] So first, without further ado, we're going to welcome Maria, marasco from Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative, welcome Maria.

02:21:56 [UC0] Hope you're just muted.

02:22:09 [UC0] Cee event. Can you help Maria unmute?

02:22:15 [UC0] Please, and thank you.

02:22:19 [UC0] Okay.

02:22:20 [UC0] well, thank you very much for inviting the cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative to a western Mass Forum.

02:22:27 [UC0] Give me one second while I share my screen.

02:22:40 [UC0] And how is that?

02:22:43 [UC0] Looks great.

02:22:45 [UC0] All right, wonderful.

02:22:46 [UC0] Well my name is Maria marasco and I'm the executive director of the Capon, Vineyard Electric Cooperative or sivak.

02:22:54 [UC0] I would like to thank the organizers at UMass. Amherst, clean energy extension for including us in this western Mass Forum on your screen, is a sampling of some of our projects.

02:23:07 [UC0] So let me see if I can just move this off so you guys can see the full screen.

02:23:16 [UC0] So, Siebert was formed in 2007 by cape and Island municipalities and the county to develop renewable energy projects and share the financial and operational benefits.

02:23:29 [UC0] Derived from a Cooperative model since then Cee, back has grown to 25 and member towns from the cape Island and

02:23:37 [UC0] Southeastern. Massachusetts Civic is authorized under the Massachusetts, Electric Cooperative statute and any municipality or political subdivision in the Commonwealth could apply for membership a town or an other type of

02:23:52 [UC0] Governmental entity. For example, an airport or a school district can work with Civic without becoming a member because Cee Vex Mission and its revenue is derived from governmental entities and serves a governmental purpose.

02:24:07 [UC0] Cee. The heck is deemed a governmental entity in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

02:24:15 [UC0] So on.

02:24:18 [UC0] I'm not probably not very good at this.

02:24:21 [UC0] There we go.

02:24:22 [UC0] So to the left of your screen, you'll see that the list of the number of civics project Cee because issued six rounds and is in the process of issuing, another round of projects and we will be issuing

02:24:38 [UC0] The next round for 13 projects, all roof-mounted solar with battery and an energy storage on the cape, and the islands. Cee bike has 74 behind the meter and in front of the M projects that when all energized will deliver

02:24:52 [UC0] Six megawatts today.

02:24:55 [UC0] Cee back has 48 of cfx. Projects are operational and producing about forty eight megawatts.

02:25:02 [UC0] And the remaining projects are under or pending construction a sieve X, most recent projects include battery and energy storage system, a learning curve for sivak and it's member towns, but we're

02:25:18 [UC0] Wing it.

02:25:18 [UC0] And recently, the Massachusetts Department of energy resources gave sivak a 1.4 million dollar Grant to install a 250 KW battery at the mid cakes Regional emergency shelter and

02:25:33 [UC0] Very grateful to, it's a three administration's Patrick and Baker and the current administration's for seeing us through this grant process. And we're hopeful that that battery will be energized

02:25:48 [UC0] Early next year.

02:25:49 [UC0] So I know that the previous Forum there were presentations about state and local laws and regulations related to Solar Development.

02:25:59 [UC0] I just put this in this presentation.

02:26:02 [UC0] slide to show you that these are the options and then there's another option which sivak has the ability to utilize again under the Massachusetts, Electric Cooperative statutes.

02:26:18 [UC0] That statute one of those statues.

02:26:22 [UC0] There are two. Enabling statute says that the municipality other than a Municipal Light plant can become a member of a group purchasing and the disposition of the land shall not require competitive bidding, if there is a PPA

02:26:37 [UC0] This stirred through the statute, the prevailing wage is implied.

02:26:41 [UC0] Cee back is the Electric Cooperative that is administering this program.

02:26:49 [UC0] So there are under the stablish under this program.

02:26:53 [UC0] Sivak establishes a procurement guidelines for each procurement. It generally the same Falls within the four corners of public, good, public policy, and good in public procurement, and our current model.

02:27:08 [UC0] Includes that.

02:27:10 [UC0] There's always an intergovernmental agreement between Civic and the hostess of polity or the school district or the fire district or the airport. For example, there is always a PPA, a power purchase agreement between

02:27:25 [UC0] Either, and the developer and the rider can be Elise between the



municipality and the developer where there can be a lease or a site agreement between sivak and the municipality.

02:27:37 [UC0] And then see if I can turn gives a developer a sublease, this statute cannot be used for Lease Only projects. The statute requires that there has to be a PPA between Cee back and the developer under the statute or

02:27:52 [UC0] Now that there is the opportunity for civic to own assets assets, the statute would allow for there to be a PPA between Cee Beck and the town. So, in addition under

02:28:07 [UC0] Town can also purchase.

02:28:09 [UC0] Just net metering, credits through Cee back. They don't have to install a system on their premises.

02:28:15 [UC0] This could be for any renewable projects, solar wind Cee that buys a share and in turn we sell stock shares to different members. Right now, the projects that sivak is a are involved in

02:28:31 [UC0] Are all cashed out net metering credits so they Municipal eight municipalities once a month.

02:28:37 [UC0] get a check through sivak for the net metering, credit, the value of the sum of what was produced at either the, a wind farm or another solar farm and I'll get into that a little bit later.

02:28:53 [UC0] so, on behalf of the members who are interested in developing solar and we make an inquiry says, who is interested in building solar where you see vac well with wants to pull together around and around

02:29:08 [UC0] is a number of projects that see that can pull under one RFP process, and the towns and or the public entities can all share in the costs

02:29:23 [UC0] And all share in the purchasing power of a 1 large procurement.

02:29:29 [UC0] This was done for a number of reasons, just our proximity of the cape developers.

02:29:35 [UC0] Just want to go over the bridge so they're unlikely to come for one but they're more likely to come for 13, they're unlikely to come for 100 kilowatt hours of production per month, but they would

02:29:51 [UC0] likely to come for two megawatts of production and that gets that all translates into again, economies of scale, buying power and trying to lower costs or

02:30:07 [UC0] The net energy price.

02:30:08 [UC0] So quickly, I just see if ex-model a participant shares, the RFP preparation, issuance selection and contract, preparation and negotiation constant costs with other round participants

02:30:24 [UC0] And it has the benefit of sharing sieved. X-team expertise, right now. Seen Cee Vex team for new round is we're very fortunate to have collaborated with the Massachusetts Wholesale, Electric Corporation out of Ludlow.

02:30:39 [UC0] They manage many of Massachusetts.

02:30:42 [UC0] Municipal lights, light plants, and Cee, Vex attorneys who have been on the Forefront of Solar Development and Contracting since 2007,

02:30:56 [UC0] So what you are looking at is a partial R over partial annual systems report for FY 23. So as I mentioned, see, that will Identify the property

02:31:12 [UC0] Help a town determine is the location suitable.

02:31:16 [UC0] Sometimes we have a lot of historic, concerns or cutting of the tree line. Once it makes it through that process, we will do the financial and the technical analysis, issue, the RFP,

02:31:31 [UC0] It.

02:31:31 [UC0] And then once the project is energized, Cee Beck is essentially the town's back office.

02:31:38 [UC0] we get the bills, we pay the PPA, we collect the money from the towns, and for that, we charge a nominal administrative Adder, Which is less than a penny per kilowatt hour.

02:31:52 [UC0] Steve, I've also maintains dashboards of the production of each of these systems on its website. Again, we are

02:32:01 [UC0] acting as the town's solar back office.

02:32:06 [UC0] So I know the subject matter today or I'm on my list was too.

02:32:12 [UC0] So how does this work out? It should the town, get a PPA or or town use Elysee as I mentioned, Cee Vex. Statute does not allow it.

02:32:23 [UC0] it. The chapter 164, 137 does not allow only'however, see BEC because it is a governmental entity.

02:32:31 [UC0] Entity could issue an RFP for just a Lease Only, For example, under chapter 30b. And if we did that and if we were to advise the town's we would say, well what do you need

02:32:46 [UC0] Do you need my net metering, credits to feed a meter? Or are you just looking for cash?

02:32:52 [UC0] We do have towns that were so excited about installing solar. In the early years that they have hundreds of thousands of excess. Net metering, credits.

02:33:06 [UC0] And they're just sitting on them.

02:33:07 [UC0] So while eversource, what does allow you to make a one-time transferred to an account that not going to cash them out?

02:33:14 [UC0] Cee vac does. So anyway, so under this question, do you need the net metering credits or are you looking for the cash in Southeastern Massachusetts or it's a source?

02:33:30 [UC0] Projects over 1 megawatt are likely to receive the cash value of the net metering credits from average Source. This varies slightly but I will show you that that model can actually translate into a very valuable

02:33:48 [UC0] All mostly, at least it looks like Eliza walk cycle least, but it really isn't a least Maria. Yo, I'm afraid.

02:33:56 [UC0] We're going to have to ask you to wrap up where it will.

02:33:59 [UC0] I will sell the question, the questions before you was a, what kind of net metering?

02:34:04 [UC0] Do you have this town at the capacity?

02:34:06 [UC0] for net metering credits or early they looking for cash? Do they have enough land? If they don't have enough land? This model shows you before that's Evac acts as like an intermediary and we'll find

02:34:18 [UC0] And off takers for those net metering projects quickly ownership, see that?

02:34:23 [UC0] Because in the process of determining the value of the direct pay, will it lower the cost of capital? Sufficiently to offset the cost that ownership will bring insurance costs operation costs, in terms

02:34:38 [UC0] Of maintaining it and also of monitoring those projects.

02:34:42 [UC0] So here's a quick summary.

02:34:45 [UC0] I know it's a lot on my screens. When you get an opportunity, please look at it and if you have any questions that's how to reach me. So thank you very much.

02:34:56 [UC0] I'm getting better at this as we go and thank you for your your time.

02:35:02 [UC0] Well, thank you for your time and just as a reminder Maria's presentations on the attendee hub,  
02:35:08 [UC0] And will be sent out and hopefully folks will approach Maria and Cape and Vineyard electric if you have questions or want to engage friends.  
02:35:19 [UC0] Our next presenter is Samantha Hamilton from Live. Well Springfield Samantha.  
02:35:25 [UC0] Thanks so much for joining us.  
02:35:26 [UC0] Thanks for having me.  
02:35:28 [UC0] All right, folks, I'm going to share my screen.  
02:35:33 [UC0] And begin the presentation.  
02:35:42 [UC0] Okay.  
02:35:44 [UC0] So again, excited it won't excited to be here.  
02:35:48 [UC0] I am Samantha Hamilton. I am the director of Coalition building and Community engagement at the Public Health Institute of Worcester Mass and the public health is a research and evaluation Institute.  
02:36:03 [UC0] We also do Coalition and Community. Convening, my work falls under the Coalition and Community convening bucket.  
02:36:11 [UC0] And I hope to talk to you today about equity in the Clean Energy Solutions, transition, and how we can safeguards Community wellness and well-being.  
02:36:24 [UC0] So the three points I hope to get through today is that one communities of color and low-income individuals are at are the ones most impacted by environmental crisis.  
02:36:36 [UC0] But our the or not the group most likely to engage in the solutions.  
02:36:41 [UC0] And we've heard some of the feedback from our other panelists, regarding the folks, most vulnerable and those are the communities that we serve communities of color. Have a big  
02:36:54 [UC0] Trust towards Clean Energy Solutions because of the confusion the complicated process and requirements for eligibility.  
02:37:03 [UC0] So all this noise that I'm going to call it, is making it hard for folks to feel ready and trusted to be participate in Solar Solutions.  
Community-based Clean Energy Solutions, like Community Choice  
02:37:18 [UC0] Eating which we advocated for and Springfield are available for cities and towns to build Equitable access but these Solutions still face long processes and timelines and red tape.  
02:37:32 [UC0] So we hope to kind of just again, highlight those key points.  
02:37:39 [UC0] So, when folks see this messaging or hear any infomercial that highlights, that there is no cost. No fees, no installation.  
02:37:51 [UC0] no obligation, no credit. Check, it seems too good to be true and for low income families and folks are on fixed income and that have experienced disadvantages.  
02:38:05 [UC0] This is the most scariest marketing strategies for  
02:38:08 [UC0] Low-income individuals, even though these products might be available, communities of color are not quite sure if the scheme or a gimmick in order to get access to their information.  
02:38:20 [UC0] So I want us to be mindful and messaging and how we approach communities vulnerable communities, who really want the help that they need, but are in fear that the big institutions will be taking advantage advantage of them.  
02:38:36 [UC0] So in some spaces, solar energy marketing, strategies include door knocking direct mailing emails, cold, call enquiries commercials Billboards and incentives.

02:38:52 [UC0] I live in a community where just last year, I was door knock five times for solar panels and this year alone, three times not knowing by the salesperson. Have already purchased panels on my roof but they were still knocking on my door, so the marketing

02:39:07 [UC0] Allergies to get to folks goenka middle-class folks, in sometimes, feels like a gorilla brace strategy where folks are getting information from many different Avenues and it's confusing them.

02:39:20 [UC0] It's making them harder for them to decide on what is real, and what is a scheme? And we live in a space now and a sprawl that there's a lot of schemes that we have to filter out the truth. So, knowledge base is so important in order to advance this work,

02:39:38 [UC0] Here is a case study just reflecting my family's experience with solar.

02:39:43 [UC0] So as I mentioned before I have solar panels on my home, I'm taking the lead in being an example for the work that I do in the community. My brother, he was the one that told me about what was available but in his in his

02:39:58 [UC0] But solar he ended up releasing panels at the same rate that I'm also financing my panels.

02:40:05 [UC0] Then my mother comes along this year and is not able to lease but decided to buy into a third Market vendor.

02:40:15 [UC0] Now she's buying solar at a variable rate.

02:40:19 [UC0] This case study just shows that even within one Community one household, we are getting mixed signals and messaging on what's available to us.

02:40:28 [UC0] My brother was not told about his option to finance from the sales render.

02:40:34 [UC0] that approached him.

02:40:36 [UC0] He was brought into an encouraged to do the lease agreement as if that was the best option for him.

02:40:42 [UC0] His threshold to participate, had to be a credit score of 650 annually.

02:40:48 [UC0] 650 where my special for financing 1620.

02:40:53 [UC0] So even with that he was scared, or was not sure, he qualifi, my mother went with the finding the with the purchasing option because she's currently on a fixed income and she's retired.

02:41:08 [UC0] So she fears taking on a financing for another 30 years in her bladder life.

02:41:14 [UC0] So when we think about again, the solo Solutions, even in my household, as my family has approached it, we're coming out with different outcomes and different Equitable impacts on how we're going to benefit in the long run.

02:41:27 [UC0] And as we heard from our colleagues ownership is the most Equitable option for folks.

02:41:31 [UC0] And anything less is going to lead us to be at a disadvantage in our economy.

02:41:37 [UC0] So what are we thinking about? And salute when it comes to solutions for our community, I work in Springfield as let us to advocate for Community Choice energy.

02:41:48 [UC0] Community.

02:41:49 [UC0] Trace energy is an energy Supply Supply option.

02:41:53 [UC0] That would allow the City of Springfield to get up to 100 percent of its electricity, from a clean from clean and renewable energy such as solar and

wind power.

02:42:03 [UC0] power. Eversource would still be our energy provider, but we will be buying electricity and switching to Community Choice. Energy would allow us to combat climate change, Advance ratio.

02:42:18 [UC0] and improve Public Health.

02:42:21 [UC0] So what would that really look like in our work in our Public Health Alliance of looking at solar?

02:42:29 [UC0] It looks like this.

02:42:30 [UC0] So when it comes to equity, why do we support the policy of community? Its energy at a local level.

02:42:36 [UC0] Is that low-income people will not will not be able to afford solar in their homes or invest in Clean Energy Solutions.

02:42:43 [UC0] Not everybody has the capacity to finance not everybody has the ability to lease and also know a lot of our community residents are renters.

02:42:52 [UC0] So the power to decide on what happens to your home, it's not within their power.

02:42:56 [UC0] and again, they are the ones most impacted with Community Choice energy, we will be switching to 100% clean energy which will address our Greenhouse.

02:43:05 [UC0] Gas emission as a city.

02:43:07 [UC0] So this will kind of address some of what we are concerned about in our food, for our future planet. And from a Health Equity standpoint Community Choice energy will have an impact folks with respiratory, health issues like asthma

02:43:22 [UC0] All right, heart disease, heart disease, and kidney disease, and people of color are the ones most impacted by these chronic health conditions.

02:43:30 [UC0] switching this for the community, it's not just an environmental solution, but it's also a Public Health Solution as well.

02:43:41 [UC0] So our process have been when we are, I've been advocating for Community Choice, energy is to engage the folks, most impacted by the issue. At the table, our work is done in Partnership or residents and that have helped us to outreach

02:43:56 [UC0] residents to sign our petition for a community, traits energy present to the city council Regarding why they should support and push the city, allow, the city to move Community Choice, energy forward, and to create informative videos

02:44:11 [UC0] That explains how Community Trace energy would work for the broader community.

02:44:15 [UC0] So going back to the colleagues that I mention that understanding and the information is just as important as well as financing the problem.

02:44:25 [UC0] So with our work so far, we've had a couple wins and we're in a space of waiting. The city of the city council, unanimously approved Community Choice energy for the City of Springfield and the City of

02:44:40 [UC0] Field office, the mayor's office has posted an RFP for an aggregator.

02:44:45 [UC0] So we're well on our way to the next phase of pushing forward Community Choice energy, as an equitable option for Springfield. But now we have to wait.

02:44:55 [UC0] We're waiting for an update from the city regarding the process. It's been since January of this year that this RFP has been out.

02:45:04 [UC0] We want to know the status.

02:45:05 [UC0] Have you secured an aggregator, where are the next steps? And this process does

02:45:10 [UC0] Does include a community engagement approach.

02:45:13 [UC0] So, once the city decides to choose Community Choice energy, all residents of, the city has to be aware of what our options are. We also faced state level, hiccups regarding that Community

02:45:28 [UC0] Be fully implemented because the Department of Public Utilities is currently taking two years to push application forward.

02:45:36 [UC0] So there's so much work that our state legislatures legislators can do at this point to make this process more expedient, because we are in a waiting pattern even after we've made a commitment as a community.

02:45:47 [UC0] So a lot of community residents are waiting for results, even if even through their excitement and I build momentum. So that's what I have for you. All today are working six.

02:45:57 [UC0] Citing I'm it engages Community are folks with the lived experience at the table.

02:46:03 [UC0] We're looking at that from a public health and Health Equity lens in, which the solutions for solar aligns, with impacting, the health and well-being of the folks most impacted by this issue. So for more information if you want to

02:46:18 [UC0] Contact me. My information is in my bio, but I'm also putting on the slide. And again, I appreciate the opportunity to kind of showcase our perspective on the solar form from a public health lens.

02:46:32 [UC0] Thank you, Samantha.

02:46:34 [UC0] Thank you.

02:46:35 [UC0] Thank you.

02:46:35 [UC0] thank you. Thank you to live, well Springfield and the Public Health Institute for all your leadership.

02:46:40 [UC0] Congratulations on that wind and we look forward to hearing how you push through.

02:46:45 [UC0] So thank you, we have next with us friends. Richard come president and CEO of UMass.

02:46:52 [UC0] five college credit union, Richard, you are welcome,

02:47:01 [UC0] Thank you so much and Samantha.

02:47:03 [UC0] Awesome. Right.

02:47:05 [UC0] Don't want to have to follow you but I'm glad I did.

02:47:08 [UC0] So.

02:47:11 [UC0] Are we all seeing the screen?

02:47:14 [UC0] We can see it.

02:47:15 [UC0] All right, let's get started.

02:47:17 [UC0] We're going to from beginning.

02:47:22 [UC0] And all right, so I have five minutes to talk about solar loans.

02:47:27 [UC0] It's about a 30-minute presentation.

02:47:28 [UC0] That gets squeezed into five minutes so Elizabeth and Lori, get your fingers warmed up. Everybody else is strapped. In the topics I was asked to talk about are the mass solar loan which going to learn

02:47:43 [UC0] Bunch of out my solar loan which is a proprietary product of the credit union. Those also asked to talk a little bit about Equitable access to solar in the financing space didn't have a logo for that so that's the best

02:47:58 [UC0] Can do comes out to eat.

02:48:00 [UC0] have work to do on that.

02:48:02 [UC0] I know. So Mass solar loan  
02:48:05 [UC0] two great partners for all the clean energy, folks, math, department of energy, resources, and the Clean Energy Center started this out, 2014 2015, a lot of stakeholder meetings, finally, the first financing  
02:48:21 [UC0] Kind of hit the deck in January of 2017, the challenge was to expand direct ownership, right? Of residential solar, through financing.  
02:48:33 [UC0] And if you want to take us back to Two thousand, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and that and that time frame so much why were releasing right?  
02:48:43 [UC0] there were least projects all over the Commonwealth. We saw the srec program was very generous.  
02:48:50 [UC0] Burriss early on and we had all these outside outside companies. Coming in swooping in putting least solar and taking all the revenue and all the Commerce out of the Commonwealth.  
02:49:05 [UC0] So this was about direct ownership and there were very few almost no banks or credit unions in the Commonwealth that did true solar financing.  
02:49:14 [UC0] So that was the primary goal.  
02:49:16 [UC0] How do they do it? It's a lot more to this, but this was the three primary  
02:49:22 [UC0] Primary ways that they were able to make this work.  
02:49:26 [UC0] One was an interest rate B out, right? They paid lenders or the Cee.  
02:49:30 [UC0] Cee did payday lenders to reduce the rate for the consumer by up to 3 percent, right?  
02:49:37 [UC0] Very makes a payment much more comfortable for a consumer.  
02:49:43 [UC0] Also pays all that interest up front to the lender what a country, right?  
02:49:48 [UC0] Second thing, income-based, principal reduction, probably the most productive of the of the incentives that were available through this program for those who qualified  
02:50:03 [UC0] Households qualified for this. They could get up to 30 percent of their loan paid down by the Cee Cee, right?  
02:50:13 [UC0] So whoop, that was great because the break even before the low-income households with two years and less in many cases because not only you get the 30% here, they had to renewable energy tax credit which at the time was still  
02:50:28 [UC0] 34. Drop the 26, right?  
02:50:31 [UC0] They get the S rex or smart and it really made a lot of sense for folks to do this. So that was a big piece of it.  
02:50:40 [UC0] The third was long-lost Reserve, I'll talk more about this later but it provided lenders with a kind of a bad Loan Fund where if we made loans to folks with lower  
02:50:55 [UC0] Credit scores, right?  
02:50:57 [UC0] The credit union.  
02:50:58 [UC0] The bank wouldn't be eating the entire loss. Most of that would be picked up but through Public Funding.  
02:51:05 [UC0] So that's kind of how they they did it and how did it go?  
02:51:12 [UC0] Let's find out here right? They'll first of all they completed nearly 6,000 residential solar program is a big number.  
02:51:21 [UC0] Over half of that number went to income qualified residents.  
02:51:27 [UC0] It started out median income or below that an 80% median income but at the end of the day half of them were done for income qualified residents and

over 1,000, right, we're located in environmental justice  
02:51:42 [UC0] Unity. So, doing real well here, 79 percent of the funds awarded went to support income qualified projects and we're just checking off all them, all the boxes here, 60 percent of  
02:51:58 [UC0] Come home. Owners said, they could not have installed Solar without the income based loans support.  
02:52:03 [UC0] That's why I said that that subsidy was so important. Hey and at the end of the day 185 million dollars in solar projects were financed and leveraged by  
02:52:19 [UC0] A little over 40 million in public funds.  
02:52:21 [UC0] So almost a four to one ratio of public private financing.  
02:52:29 [UC0] And then hey, they did such a great job.  
02:52:33 [UC0] The Cee. Cee won an award as a state and the state leadership in clean energy.  
02:52:38 [UC0] So, kudos to everybody at doer in the Cee, Cee and well here.  
02:52:48 [UC0] Afraid, we're at time. So if I know it's a brutal Pace, but all right, let me get right to the end of it. Here, you won't talk about this cheese. I did this in practice.  
02:53:03 [UC0] this, why don't I just  
02:53:06 [UC0] And stop the share.  
02:53:09 [UC0] Right.  
02:53:09 [UC0] And the the last thing I want to say is when it comes to finding ways, to lend to low-income consumers, in those with challenged credit score, those are really the way financiers.  
02:53:25 [UC0] have to deal with with Equity if you will low income, usually not a problem because there are so many benefits that accumulate that, you know, the loan gets paid for by no energy bill and the other incentives, the other  
02:53:40 [UC0] Sing in his talked about like Christine and also Samantha, I'm sorry. And that is the low credit score folk. There's not a lot of lot that can be done without a backstop like  
02:53:55 [UC0] Cee seated.  
02:53:57 [UC0] And the reason for that is these are basically unsecured loans, you know, Thirty forty fifty thousand. We use the the equipment as the collateral, the riches, and going on up on a roof at midnight when somebody  
02:54:12 [UC0] Hey there loan and pull off those solar panels.  
02:54:15 [UC0] So these are unsecured loans and they have to go to very credit worthy, folks, unless there is a backstop and that is the end of my presentation. Sorry, we skip some stuff in there but the presentation is available.  
02:54:31 [UC0] Thanks Rich and we really appreciate you. You trying to squeeze it all in 25 minutes and for all interpreters both the the simultaneous  
02:54:46 [UC0] Nation from Lori and Elizabeth and for our Spanish language translation.  
02:54:50 [UC0] Thank you so much for allowing us to and being with us as we try to keep pace so that we can get all these good presentations in and have this conversations complex conversation.  
02:55:06 [UC0] The next person up is Chris modish and Chris, it may be modish, so you'll tell me from the Massachusetts agios office.  
02:55:14 [UC0] Thanks for coming. Yeah, thank you for having me and it's, it is mod Lish. There's an L in there.  
02:55:20 [UC0] Sneaking in after the day, which is tends to hide.  
02:55:23 [UC0] Thanks for the correction.



02:55:27 [UC0] Oh no, no problem at all.

02:55:29 [UC0] And so, yeah, thank you for having me. I'm an Assistant Attorney General here at the attorney.

02:55:34 [UC0] His office and I'm in the energy and Telecommunications Division. And for those of you that don't know, it sounds like some of you are aware of the agios role but our division, our primary primary role is to intervene

02:55:49 [UC0] At the Department of Public Utilities and almost you know, almost every docket that it that is takes place there in our main role is to Advocate on behalf of all Massachusetts rate payers. So you know, we like to say that we try to keep everybody's energy bills as low as possible and

02:56:04 [UC0] Make sure that every dollar that the investor owned utilities spend is going to improve the system that in those dollars are spent.

02:56:12 [UC0] Well, and also that their help their spent in a way that can help us transition the grid towards a more clean and efficient grid. So but anyway, I'll get now to my presentation. We just share my

02:56:29 [UC0] Green.

02:56:31 [UC0] I hope so.

02:56:40 [UC0] And is that displaying in we're seeing your we can see the yeah you know. But I think it's okay. I mean I can

02:56:53 [UC0] If you go to display settings and click duplicate, you should be all set.

02:57:02 [UC0] Thank you.

02:57:03 [UC0] All right, that looks better.

02:57:05 [UC0] So yeah, the movie the the rest of my presentation is going to focus on our consumer complaints that we've seen related to the residential solar energy, and our efforts in addressing those complaints.

02:57:21 [UC0] And so this this present presentations going to dovetail bit with Samantha's presentation earlier regarding, you know, some of the industry trends that we've seen in the way that it's impacting communities and helpful way.

02:57:32 [UC0] So I'll start with know the way that our office really got involved in, in this, in this field is just by receiving complaints, from consumers, reviewing them and then deciding what to do about them. And so here is a grouping of

02:57:47 [UC0] Probably the most common complaints that we see from consumers versus art regarding the residential solar systems. The first general grouping is aggressive and misleading marketing tactics. So you know as Samantha highlighted in her presentation earlier,

02:58:03 [UC0] Many of these solar companies use aggressive door-to-door sales tactics as well as telemarketing tactics.

02:58:10 [UC0] A lot of the problems that we see are over-promising and under-delivering.

02:58:15 [UC0] So a lot of promises regarding anything from how much money the consumer is going to save on their bills, to the Timeline under which the panels will be installed on the top of the home and

02:58:31 [UC0] If it's beyond just that misrepresenting who they come from, we see marketers saying that they're from the utility company to create something molarity with Zoomer.

02:58:41 [UC0] They also say they're from the government, or from the state. They promised no costs are no upfront fees, or no cost systems.

02:58:50 [UC0] a lot of times consumers and then they just use the variety of

marketing tactics that kind of pressure consumers into signing, especially signing up for agreements like right on the spot in the term.

02:59:01 [UC0] Out of the running for sales.

02:59:02 [UC0] So the consumer is just a lot of times, don't know exactly what they're signing up or in the terms of the agreement that they're signing on to and that can lead to a lot of problems down the road.

02:59:13 [UC0] And then, yeah, I covered it briefly. But you know, big problem that we're seeing with a lot of these companies is promising to install systems on on a certain timeline and then not delivering on that timeline in this, this creates a special

02:59:28 [UC0] um specific problems with with least agreements that I believe a couple of the other presenters I'm covered with, the options to have solar panels on top of your home where the the company promises the panels will be installed and you know

02:59:43 [UC0] Say three months and then usually the payments. It's also in the agreement that the lease payment will start in three months, then there's significant can be. Sometimes see very significant delays in panels actually being installed can be a years

02:59:58 [UC0] The Agreements are signed and in not only not only there, can there be delays and installation but also just Activation. So basically the other us a situation where a customer was promised to be saving money on their electric bills through the provision of solar energy.

03:00:13 [UC0] you on a certain timeline and then they end up in a situation where they're paying not only their energy bill which is not being reduced their solar energy but also paying for their lease under the lease agreement for their PPA agreement, that can be a and then you know

03:00:28 [UC0] Pounding on that problem.

03:00:29 [UC0] Another thing that I have up here is unresponsive customer service, so when the customer realizes the situation, what's happening, but they're not getting the benefit of the deal that they thought they signed up for.

03:00:39 [UC0] They can't get in contact with a company.

03:00:41 [UC0] They go where they can get into the contact with the company but they're just they're not. They don't receive a solution to their problem in a timely manner, and then they end up contacting our office.

03:00:52 [UC0] And so those are some of the bigger ones. You know, there's a number of

03:00:57 [UC0] Other problems.

03:00:58 [UC0] I think those are the biggest ones and I'll move on to.

03:01:02 [UC0] so a very specific issue that we're seeing with Community solar.

03:01:09 [UC0] So I would say probably the biggest grouping of complaints that we see is related to community solar plants and I think most people are probably familiar annually, familiar with the plans and they've been talked about a little bit earlier today, but this

03:01:24 [UC0] A customer doesn't pay to have panels put on top of their home but rather pays for solar Credits based on a panel a lot Min from a solar field that located away from their home and usually what the company does is they promised a percentage savings on your Atilla t on your utility

03:01:39 [UC0] He billed based on the amount of solar panels in the Solar field that your allotted. And what happens is the customer does usually end up receiving the percent discount on the solar credits that they're buying from the community

Solar Company.

03:01:53 [UC0] However, the companies have a very noticeable practice of oversizing the credits. Essentially, so they sign up the customers for more solar credits than they could possibly use based on their utility bills so they get a disk,

03:02:08 [UC0] They get a discount on those credits but they're paying for way more credits than they could ever need.

03:02:13 [UC0] And of course, the company's promise that, you know, any credits that you don't use, you will be credited will be on your utility bill. But when you have some time, A lot of times, we have a lot of complaints where consumers are signing up for credits, you know, 300, 400 percent

03:02:28 [UC0] Over what their normal utility bill is, they just accumulate these credits over time that they could never possibly use even in a month when they they use it, you know, way more electricity than they normally would.

03:02:40 [UC0] And so it just they end up paying you double triple what they should be paying normally when they've actually been promised a percentage savings on the utility bill. And in what makes this this this Market especially concerning for

03:02:55 [UC0] This is that we see all the problems with marketing and misleading sales tactics are, especially concentrated in this, in this market. And we also see the company's targeting elderly low-income and linguish language limited population.

03:03:10 [UC0] Like strands in it makes sense in a certain respect.

03:03:14 [UC0] You mean these populations are much more likely to live in apartments are not be able to afford upfront costs and they're looking to, you know, like we all are but especially people that are struggling are looking for ways to save money on their bills and when they're promised these deals and there,

03:03:30 [UC0] They're basically, not just, I mean they're essentially lied to by sales reps that get them into these deals and then they end up paying way more than they should. And, you know, if people are a lot of times already energy burdened and it just compounds the problem even further

03:03:45 [UC0] And makes them, you know, on, you know, not want to trust the solar industry even more.

03:03:51 [UC0] And so it's, you know, it's very concerning for office.

03:03:53 [UC0] So I'm going to move on quickly to certain ways that our office has responded to these complaints. And I think I'm probably running close to my time, so I won't go into too much detail.

03:04:07 [UC0] mean, you can try to read the details here on the presentation will be available to everybody, basically the first step that our offices.

03:04:14 [UC0] Takes usually is we have a great consumer advocacy and response Division and a lot of times when we see a specific problem, someone from that division will reach out directly to the consumer and usually work with them to try to fix the problem and a lot of times having someone from our team.

03:04:30 [UC0] Call up the utility.

03:04:32 [UC0] I mean, call it the Solar Company and Advocate on behalf of the consumer can be very helpful and is usually much more effective than just having the consequent do it on their own.

03:04:40 [UC0] Because we know the ways to basically, we can read the contracts much in a much more effective way in in a lot of times, we can get really effective resolutions for customers.

03:04:52 [UC0] I'm just by, you know, advocating on their behalf when the Solar Company.

03:04:55 [UC0] So this is an example that I have another one here.

03:04:59 [UC0] In this but I don't think I have time to go into the details but you know they're there but that's a 40 seconds. Okay, sorry, hats thought. So then I'll just go go very quickly on the last piece. So

03:05:14 [UC0] Option for our office Beyond just direct consumer, advocacy, is pursuing enforcement actions. Under 90 chapter 94, be a, which allows us to go. After any unfair methods of competition or unfair and deceptive acts, we have an instituted, any actions as of

03:05:30 [UC0] Yet. But are we are actively exploring this option to try to enforce these rules against some of the worst actors at the industry.

03:05:38 [UC0] We also have consumer protection regulations, which we have the option of pressing and we're looking into doing that very heavily. We've also whole held a solar consumer protection round tables, which tried to bring together industry industry leaders so that we can voice

03:05:54 [UC0] Um, our concerns with some of these complaint Trends to have them proactively, take care of it on. You know, I have to say, unfortunately it hasn't. We haven't really seen much for tuition from these efforts yet, so we are looking more heavily at enforcement actions in the near future.

03:06:09 [UC0] Sure.

03:06:08 [UC0] And then we also have a website with solar best practices to try to help consumers, avoid some of the worst scams out there.

03:06:16 [UC0] And I we also commented on this, see a consumer guide, the solar energy and yeah, I believe that is, that's basically it.

03:06:24 [UC0] So yeah, thank you for the time. And yeah, I look forward to questions after after the ant. Thank you, Chris, Chris mod leche. We're really grateful to you to the AG for sure. Please give our best friend.

03:06:38 [UC0] Western Mass and thank you to you and your team.

03:06:40 [UC0] It's worth saying friends that the agios office.

03:06:44 [UC0] Chris, you know, reached out to say, hey, we're here about this solar Forum.

03:06:48 [UC0] We want to tell you how we are part of coming to the aid of communities and individuals.

03:06:53 [UC0] So thank you so much for offering to present today along with all these other great speakers. Okay. Last this afternoon but certainly not least is Jo Ann buceta from doar, s green.

03:07:07 [UC0] In communities, a beautiful program. I know many folks in communities understand the depth and breadth of this. Thanks so much to. And for being here, you're welcome some.

03:07:21 [UC0] Making sure you can see my slides.

03:07:24 [UC0] I suspect. You see the non presentation version. Yep. Yep. We do we see the non presentation portion.

03:07:30 [UC0] Hang on. Maybe just do slideshow if it is.

03:07:35 [UC0] It's there we go. Greetings.

03:07:38 [UC0] Everyone last but not least.

03:07:40 [UC0] I'm going to do a little speed, slides related to some general policy, Trends with Massachusetts Department of energy resources and our secretary at the executive office of energy and environmental Affairs, otherwise known as eea.

03:07:56 [UC0] I'm going to talk a little bit about some current opportunities within our green communities program.

03:08:02 [UC0] Some deadlines and touch, upon some federal funding opportunities, specifically for municipalities has, that's my world. I work with municipalities, so I'm going to Dive Right In and of course, many of you may be familiar

03:08:17 [UC0] With some of the recent legislation that was enacted in the past few years, that really Advanced our clean energy and climate goals.

03:08:24 [UC0] The act from 2022 in particular led to enhanced EV rebates establishes some more robust Interstate cooperation for renewable. Energy, generation and

03:08:40 [UC0] Its Mission. And that of course, comes on the heels of extended planning efforts that developed the 2050 decarbonization roadmap. That also is based on the clean energy and climate plan. But the most important thing of all

03:08:55 [UC0] this work is that we have a net zero goal of zero emissions by 2050 and it's established by Statute that we have to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent in

03:09:10 [UC0] The 30 and 75 percent in 2040.

03:09:13 [UC0] So we've got a lot of work to do and those of you that have been around for a while recognize that this is a significant policy pivot from the global warming Solutions Act and the green communities act in 2008. So

03:09:28 [UC0] Recycle, I don't go anywhere without my map slide here. So we're up to two hundred ninety-one, green communities, that are designated the last group or all in western Mass.

03:09:40 [UC0] yay for 13. And this is a program that we've been actively awarding grants for the past dozen years or so. We have recurrent competitive Grant solicitation out with the deadline later

03:09:55 [UC0] Fall and for those communities, that are not yet a green Community. We have a deadline of acting, think December 29th or designation applications, and will continue to offer designations till the whole state is Green.

03:10:11 [UC0] So as I said we've been around for about 10 years or so. We've awarded over 160 million dollars to cities and towns for clean energy grants, particularly to upgrade facilities.

03:10:24 [UC0] Enhance Energy Efficiency, installation, weatherization. We're now starting to look at helping to fund EVs and they and the municipal Fleet about, you know, we're not alone.

03:10:37 [UC0] And, you know, providing these fundings.

03:10:40 [UC0] Massive program has contributed over 36 million dollars, to help with that.

03:10:45 [UC0] And the most important thing I think to our communities is reducing energy costs.

03:10:51 [UC0] So over over the years, energy costs have been reduced by twenty six million dollars and the emissions reduction of 66 metric. 66 thousand metric tons is nothing to sneeze at

03:11:05 [UC0] But just like climate policy, our green communities program is pivoting as well.

03:11:11 [UC0] Some of you may have heard of this.

03:11:14 [UC0] It's been socialized in the past year or so we're looking to launch a 2.0 version of green communities, I think want to Brand it as climate leader because it sounds better than 2.0.

03:11:26 [UC0] And again, this will better align our resources or tools or technical assistance to municipalities to meet these

03:11:35 [UC0] Action goals provide in a framework for them to do this work and

also better engagement with municipalities. Because as many of you know that you know, working local government. There's a lot of cities and towns that are leading the way

03:11:50 [UC0] I am frankly.

03:11:51 [UC0] We need to catch up to them and help provide them with the resources they need. So they can even go further.

03:11:58 [UC0] So pivoting to, you know, the commercial this is an actual grant that will hit the street and the next couple of weeks, it's Municipal energy, technical assistance, or meta. And this allows any

03:12:14 [UC0] City or town. You don't have to be a green Community to apply for these. You can also be a Regional School District or Water, waste water district and it's hiring a third party that has expertise that your team wax. Usually it's engineering or

03:12:29 [UC0] Designing.

03:12:30 [UC0] clean energy facilities, or doing feasibility, studies, and so forth. So I just want to point that out. It's not on the street yet but it will be very soon.

03:12:41 [UC0] These are short, grants about 15,000 dollars but it really goes far in identifying path forward for clean energy projects in your community.

03:12:55 [UC0] Is that on the street yet. But the deadline we hope will be November 17th. And then the competitive Green community Grant has a deadline of October 12th. Okay, taking a breath.

03:13:09 [UC0] Now, we're going to talk about Federal funding. I kind of view this as a tsunami of funds that are coming at us at always and I just try to focus on what's available to cities and towns.

03:13:21 [UC0] Because if I, you know, residential it's my head will explode.

03:13:25 [UC0] Explode.

03:13:26 [UC0] So there's a few upcoming opportunities that touch upon some of the topics that were talked about today, solar for all our step.

03:13:36 [UC0] I'm not going to spell it out, i ee C VG by the climate pollution reduction grants and the renew America's schools, grants some details on the solar. For all this is an active application.

03:13:49 [UC0] working on right now is through our proposal was released a few weeks ago when we received over 60,

03:13:55 [UC0] Rob responses to that.

03:13:57 [UC0] So, the application team at D, we are is actively putting together the application with partners. And, you know, the basic tenets of this is to really expand solar benefits to all

03:14:12 [UC0] Typically low and moderate income individuals and households.

03:14:15 [UC0] So the application I believe is due the end of the month now mid-october. And so, they're busy working with their partners are developing that our staff is an another active application that

03:14:31 [UC0] We just fat and just hit the street, two weeks ago and it's due November 3rd. And this is essentially forming collaborative with state government nongovernmental organizations and other groups to really put together some tool Wilson resources

03:14:46 [UC0] Municipalities and local governments to help them site and permit renewable energy facilities in a meaningful way.

03:14:55 [UC0] so they feel they're empowered with the right information you know we've all heard stories about hope there's no big solar developers on but so

developers coming in and kind of steamrolling over them.

03:15:08 [UC0] them. Volunteer planning boards who really want to bolster the local resources to be able to have a meaningful engagement.

03:15:15 [UC0] Mint with renewable energy.

03:15:17 [UC0] Citing.

03:15:19 [UC0] So this is the again, is something we're working on collaborating with transcript at UMass and others, and stay tuned for more and then Cee, Cee BG.

03:15:31 [UC0] This is a Energy Efficiency conservation.

03:15:33 [UC0] Block grant at, this is funds directly to cities and towns. If you're a community that is over 35,000, you get a direct Grant from the Department of energy.

03:15:45 [UC0] And they range from 76002 almost 700,000.

03:15:50 [UC0] So, it's not a huge amount of money if you're in a community, that is larger and you have no idea what you're talking about.

03:15:58 [UC0] please reach out to me or are somebody at Town Hall. Perhaps, they can help you.

03:16:07 [UC0] Smaller communities.

03:16:08 [UC0] Do we are is tasked with issuing sub-grants.

03:16:11 [UC0] So that's something my group is working on, and we submitted our ideas to the Department of energy.

03:16:19 [UC0] Hopefully, they'll tell us in the next couple of weeks, a couple of months, whether they approve it and we're looking at awarding sub-grants to smaller communities.

03:16:29 [UC0] the 30 to 60 thousand dollar range, sort of quick fixes or quick projects or things.

03:16:36 [UC0] Is that are easy to implement and I have minimal reporting burden because with any of these federal grants there's a huge amount of importing and nobody likes that.

03:16:48 [UC0] And last but not least, these are agreeing Community coordinators.

03:16:53 [UC0] I'm assuming most of the audience is from Western Mass. So when I highlight Chris Mason, you joined us back in January, and he's been very busy, getting out meeting, local energy committees, and folks out how

03:17:08 [UC0] So if you haven't met him yet, drop him a line in Central Mass. We have Kelly Brown in Southeastern Mass.

03:17:15 [UC0] This is Sullivan and Mark have been ski is moonlighting as a Northeastern coordinator.

03:17:21 [UC0] We're hoping to fill that position really, really soon.

03:17:23 [UC0] And my contact information is at the bottom. I'm Jo a said, I'm the director and I believe that.

03:17:30 [UC0] Yeah, I did. It took a breath.

03:17:35 [UC0] And thank you for inviting me to this.

03:17:37 [UC0] I know that was a lot of information, but I appreciate the opportunity to share.

03:17:41 [UC0] No, no, we really appreciate everyone's forbearance with the clock.

03:17:47 [UC0] so thank you. I don't know if you breathed actually but we're grateful to you and the green communities grateful to everyone.

03:17:53 [UC0] All right, friends. I should have said as we started this, that I said at the beginning that we had some cancellations and some illnesses and just life happens for people.

03:18:04 [UC0] one of the things we wanted to say this half for this third was that

we had did hope to have someone with a municipal leadership position that person was planned and then something happened be you know, because we wanted to hear stories

03:18:19 [UC0] Is of where solar is working.

03:18:21 [UC0] and then we're sore loser, really a challenge in municipalities. And we just want to make sure to direct you to the fourth Forum, which is next Tuesday, which is going to have perspectives on solar and you could be

03:18:37 [UC0] To hear from Municipal officials at that Forum with our gratitude.

03:18:41 [UC0] So Maria. Samantha Richard Chris and Jo Ann. Thank you so much for your kindness and for your forbearance. So Samantha this supposed to you first, the first question.

03:18:57 [UC0] So people were super psyched to hear about the word, the work that you're doing.

03:19:02 [UC0] So the question is, how will the Community Choice?

03:19:08 [UC0] aggregation, secure lower utility costs for low-income residents and we'll the CCA be able to partner with local locally owned solar projects to provide Supply

03:19:23 [UC0] To the CCA. How are you thinking about that?

03:19:26 [UC0] Okay, so one of the biggest concerns for residents is cost savings. So knowing that energy prices are still fluctuating and it varies, we could not guarantee that statement. So, instead of saying, we

03:19:41 [UC0] Guarantee this savings, we talked about price stability and that's what folks are worried about that lives on a fixed income.

03:19:47 [UC0] And and you can't say, fixed income.

03:19:51 [UC0] Folks can have variable expenses, you can't go up and down and utility bills or anything, because we live on the margin.

03:19:59 [UC0] what we were advocating for with city council was that we can't guarantee that it will going down. Most Municipal, Cee, Cee, Cee have shown

03:20:11 [UC0] Lower consistency, but we cannot promise that. But price stability is our kind of honest.

03:20:18 [UC0] Honest, marketing strategy, right?

03:20:19 [UC0] So, and then the other piece is that as a whole. It's the city's responsibility to identify the aggregator and identified, the third party vendor that will be supplying, the City of Springfield

03:20:35 [UC0] Sumer is have the power in the process to choose how much clean energy they would like to take advantage of.

03:20:42 [UC0] So I said up to 100% renewable.

03:20:45 [UC0] So some folks might want to start with 20 50 percent 75 and then 100. So within that individual consumers on their utility bill, when they choose their choosing, what makes

03:21:00 [UC0] And spread them and that's the power of community Trace energy.

03:21:03 [UC0] So again it's uh, setting up a system and then allowing people the power to choose and if they ended up doing 100% And they see a difference, they might stay there and that's price stability.

03:21:15 [UC0] They're happy with versus the fluctuation of our fossil fuel rates and especially in wintertime and our summer heat extreme heat season. So yeah, thank you.

03:21:27 [UC0] yeah, thank you. Thank you so much, Samantha. Thanks for that. Good question.

03:21:29 [UC0] For the participant Rich, this next one's to you.



03:21:33 [UC0] So the participants said that they were surprised to hear you say that.

03:21:39 [UC0] It's not a problem for low-income people to get a solar loan.

03:21:42 [UC0] And the question here is our most banks or credit unions.

03:21:46 [UC0] Now recognizing and factoring in the value and financial benefits of solar that would allow folks who are currently low income to make solar loan payments.

03:21:57 [UC0] Is that what you were saying we'd like to hear more

03:21:59 [UC0] More about that.

03:22:00 [UC0] Yeah, so the general answer I think is probably still know what we have done. At UMass 5 is understand that the going solar for a

03:22:15 [UC0] For ownership model, right?

03:22:17 [UC0] It has very limited limited impact on budget, right?

03:22:23 [UC0] So you might be taking on a 250 dollar a month loan payments, but, you know your your your chopping out 175 dollar. You know, electricity charge, you are starting to get some smart income in

03:22:38 [UC0] Balancing that out, you know, you have the renewable energy tax credit, which you can dump right on the loan Andre amortize that.

03:22:48 [UC0] so the payment really becomes about what you're learning.

03:22:53 [UC0] Excuse me. What you're what you are saving by going solar.

03:22:58 [UC0] So if somebody is currently paying their bills they're paying them now regardless of income we see this as a budget neutral

03:23:08 [UC0] All event. Whereas I can't say the same for some of my banking Brethren and I think that is that is a bit of a problem because the way

03:23:23 [UC0] You know, the two things that matter the most to lenders are right credit score and debt-to-income ratio. And if you're going to load in a 250 dollar payment without, you know, taking account of the

03:23:38 [UC0] The fact that he have lower utility bills and you have all this other income coming in because of the incentives, there that \$250 may push somebody into a debt to income ratio,

03:23:54 [UC0] Which is outside of the normal policy policy considerations.

03:23:59 [UC0] So you know the way we look at it as if you're paying your bills now going solar shouldn't change that so that's why I say low-income shouldn't be an impediment to getting financing

03:24:14 [UC0] Hope that made sense here, that I think that was helpful. Does anybody else want to jump in?

03:24:20 [UC0] Okay, so friends, we are unbelievably at 3:00 shocking.

03:24:26 [UC0] It's been a beautiful three hours fueled by really unbelievable presenters and great. Participants.

03:24:34 [UC0] So we're on behalf of the clean energy extension and rep Mindy Domb. And all of our co-sponsors in the delegation were super grateful that you were here and we look forward to the next

03:24:50 [UC0] Next Tuesday's, solar forum and then we look forward to hearing your feedback.

03:24:54 [UC0] So this is a Shameless pitch to fill out the survey to tell us what worked and what didn't. So that we can both make next Tuesday, better and make subsequent engagement opportunities better. So take good care and again very, very grateful to you all.

03:25:29 [UC0] Recording stopped.