



Community  
Power  
Network

3166 Mt Pleasant St Washington DC 20010

February 24, 2015

Amit Ronen  
Director, GW Solar Institute  
George Washington University  
609 22<sup>nd</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20052

Dear Director Ronen:

It is my pleasure to express support for the GW Solar Institute's innovative efforts to advance low-income solar initiatives both in the District of Columbia and across the country. I highly recommend their work for a STARS Innovation Credit.

DC Solar United Neighborhoods (DC SUN) is a project of The Community Power Network. We are a 501c3 organization in Washington, DC that advocates for greater solar power accessibility and affordability for all residents. DC SUN is comprised of volunteers that provide communities with the information, connections, and opportunities they need to move efficiently through the process of going solar. Community Power Network has organized several neighborhood group purchases that reduce the cost of going solar by 20 to 30%.

While many families in DC have installed solar systems, market barriers such as high upfront costs, lack of home ownership, and lower credit scores often prevent lower income families and neighborhoods from also benefitting from solar energy. This is a particularly important issue to address because low-income residents spend a higher percentage of their income on energy bills than their more affluent counterparts and stand to benefit the most financially from using solar energy.

This past year, the GW Solar Institute's events and research helped to spark a national conversation on low-income solar and make this pressing issue a priority for both state and federal decision makers and the solar energy industry.

In April, the GW Solar Institute hosted a Roundtable that assembled a diverse group of government leaders and stakeholders from the finance, advocacy, nonprofit, and affordable housing communities to focus on how to best to utilize DC's Alternative Compliance Payments to fund low-income solar investments. This active working session brought together key leaders to engage in a daylong conversation and consensus building activity. Following the event, the GW Solar Institute sent a whitepaper detailing the group's program and policy recommendations to the District's elected officials and relevant agencies.

In September, the GW Solar Institute hosted a conference that brought a national scale focus to this important issue. This event was well attended and not only included stakeholders from many different communities but students and academics from the George Washington University. The event included



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panels, an innovation showcase to highlight efforts from across the country, and an audience participation session. The event was the first of its kind and gained positive national attention for the need to diversify and expand solar's reach. After the event, the GW Solar Institute expanded on the recommendations from its speakers and performed a deep dive research effort to recommend specific policy tools and recommendations that lawmakers can use to mitigate the solar income gap.

I commend the GW Solar Institute for its research and efforts to educate and engage a broader audience on the importance of low-income solar issues. While low-income solar expansion is not a new concept, the issue is both complex and difficult to discuss. The GW Solar Institute successfully presented the information in a collaborative, engaging, and thought provoking way. They were able to bring diverse stakeholders to the table and give a burgeoning issue the national attention it deserves.

Sincerely,

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Anya Schoolman  
Executive Director  
DC SUN/Community Power Network