



Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)

January 15, 2025, 3:00-4:30 PM

Energy & Technology Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Recording Link:

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/XJ1SFSdhXbyHuBqKOMtmjMRihoBOcoUnyiQKTgr1YYniUenDIXi4JYy5DSFLB7Y.A8Y3yGDy8KAGNHAG>

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

I. Welcome & Announcements - Introduction by Jayson Velazquez

II. Presentation about Project SunBridge (Solar for All) by Claire Sickinger, CT DEEP

- DEEP was awarded \$62.45 million through EPA's Solar for All for "Project SunBridge." Funds must be used to increase access to residential solar and energy storage systems for low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACS). DEEP is working with the Green Bank, CT Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and the Department of Housing on the application and continues to meet with the working group as the "Project SunBridge Coalition."
- In 2024 they presented to CEEJAC's Energy Subcommittee, held a public meeting, and accepted public comments into September. In 2025 they put out a survey for municipal leaders. They are also expecting to send out written comments requests on the implementation of new financial/technical assistance offers and RFQ(s) for subgrantee(s) for community engagement and education. This year they will have selected subgrantee(s) who will come up with a specific engagement plan.

III. Discussion

- How will these funds be allocated to residents in Municipal Utility areas. Traditionally GB/PURA funds stay within the IOU territories. Will that be similar with this program?
 - They have to deliver certain amount of benefits. To meet that requirement, the customers have to be enrolled in the residential renewable energy solution program for solar or for storage. These services are only available to

certain customers such as those of Eversource. She will get confirmation on this since not completely certain.

- Not talking about people who are renters just leasing energy from the solar panels.
 - On affordable multiple family house, the solar marketplace is a lease option with the property owner which ultimately benefits the tenant in the property.
 - Solar For All offerings for single family can include a leasing offering. They are in a program development phase and will get more comments on this.
- Can you put the emails in the chat?
 - CT Green Bank - stefanie.keohane@ctgreenbank.com
 - DEEP: Claire.sickinger@ct.gov
 - CHFA: tina.brockett@chfa.org
- Are these loans available for public Housing Authorities or only private owners? And is there opportunity for loan forgiveness?
 - We do not anticipate these being forgivable loans. The loan structure is more of a revolving loan model. Revolving loan is lending out money for a project and as it is repaid they would use the funds for more loans within the program or as time passes for similar types of loans. The money would revolve and go out for the owner to use and come back to them. Yes, public housing authorities can be eligible.
- Are the higher incentives still going to be the same for the low-income population and underserved communities? Do these incentives also include the disabled and elderly population?
 - If someone lives in any of the census tract, which can be seen on the CEJST Tool [available here](#) or the EPA EJ Screen [available here](#), they would be eligible and that would include disabled and elderly populations. There are also customers that regardless of geographical location will be eligible due to their income.
- How do you determine what goes into the RFP? Is there a schedule folks can think about?
 - The next RFP would be for an entity or more than one to provide that community education and engagement (e.g., the engagement plan). How they determine what goes in the RFP is through feedback they hear from attendees today and from responses in their request for written comments which will go out within the next month.
- How much funding is in the community education and engagement RFP?
 - \$3 million allocated for community education and engagement.
- Has DEEP considered working with Sustainable CT or CT Energy Network?

- DEEP will do the request for proposals and that process will determine who is doing the engagement and education, but these might be folks that RFP vendors could partner with.
- What do they envision with community engagement and education?
 - We have tossed around some ideas such as setting up a one stop shop or concierge service that can lead people through different application processes. They have funding for technical assistance for communities trying to support the energy and storage that they can use for this as well.
- Would it be possible with additional support from other partners to outline the specific projects and selection criteria to bring it back to CEEJAC or community-based leaders at the potential open house/forum others have suggested?

Opportunity for DEEP to consider how to make community voices part of selection criteria.

 - They need to ask their attorney. One solution they have done before is issuing a draft RFQ first and put that out for public comment. Does not think they can make the bids completely public and have the whole CEEJAC weigh in on who to select but they can look into whether they can have a representative from CEEJAC on the advisory committee.
 - A participant suggested making bid information transparent without having identifying information and then have CEEJAC or the public weigh in on that. They will look into this but cannot make any promises.
- Will you fund more than one RFP? So perhaps either regional or programmatic focus?
 - There is potential to do more than one RFQ and select more than one entity to do this work. It comes down to how much money people need to do the work they say they need to do.
- The Green Bank programs have interests around 6%... can they be dropped to 0 or 3%? Also wants to know about whether the rooftop repairs are going to be 100% or 50% funded? These types of things would increase the value of the building.
 - They do not know yet and will ask about this in the request for written public comment period. Thinking about approaching single family and multifamily homes differently.
 - Hope to lower the cost in different programs. [Smart-E loan program](#), through CT Green Bank, offers CT based lender network financing which has interest rates tied to the federal standards. That is an area they are seeking input in terms of how to offer lower interest rates. On the multifamily side, the intent

is to build upon on the solar tariff offered at the state level and make the cost more accessible.

- Would be helpful for advocates to see how the money is being spent. It is important to hold the program accountable and making sure the money is going back to tenants who need it the most.
 - The money they are giving to partners will go directly to low income and disadvantage communities. What kind of format and cadence would be most useful to you? Attendee said quarterly would be a reasonable asked but the more information the better.
- Facilitator's question to attendees: What networks or platforms should DEEP use to spread the word about requests for comments and RFPs to ensure a broad audience is reached?
 - Virtual open house or forum for people who have questions.
 - Spread the word through community action agency. Municipal land use - affordable housing commissions COGS Faith-based organizations.
- Facilitator's question to attendees: Should DEEP prioritize certain municipalities for engagement and education?
 - How are they reaching the people that own the building who do not live there or have lower incomes.
- Facilitator's question to attendees: How can DEEP ensure the selected subgrantee has the trust of their community? What kind of questions should DEEP ask in the RFP to determine level of trust?
- Facilitator's question to attendees: What consumer protection measures might be necessary to ensure customers aren't taken advantage of?
 - DEEP needs to have a certification or authorization of solar companies that have been approved and maybe even have a symbol/emblem to indicate this.
 - Create a hotline or customer service with a real human.
 - Discussion in the legislature around looking at taxes and if putting solar on a house/rental unit increase the value and the rent as a result. Ensuring there is an environmental justice component to the tax itself.
 - Develop something like Energize CT where customers can go to verify it's a reputable company.

List of Registrants

Terry Adams

Yaw Darko

Sheila Barney

Doris Johnson

Veronica Szczerkowski

Peter Baiardi

Paul Aresta

Kallysia Raymond

Sonya Carrizales

Diane Lauricella	Adrienne Houel	Stefanie K
Joseph DeNicola	William Rees	Lauren Savidge
Desen Ozkan	Emily Bigl	Denise Savageau
Matt Dmyterko	Ms. Halle Lisette Pierce	Omar Green
Erin McBride	Greg Ohadoma	Anthony Afriyie
Patty Marks	Alissa Bullard Bumstead	Jayson Velazquez
Barry Reaves	Ryan Boggio	Omar Green
Ian McElwee	Alanna Barrera	Rahiem Eleazer
Jelani Fletcher	Claire Sickinger	Emily Basham
Fleur D	Tina Brockett	Kendall Keelen
Samantha Dynowski	Jacquelyn Torres	Theresa Hopkins-Staten
alincine francois	Mark Mitchell MD	Ethan Werstelr