

“Community Solar Champions” recognized in Delaware

Coalition for Community Solar Access honors individuals, organizations for dedication to advancing Delaware’s Community Solar Program

Dover, DE. (October 19, 2021) – The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is marking a year of significant growth and momentum for community solar by recognizing Delaware advocates for their work in 2021 supporting updates to the state’s community solar program. They are among 26 Community Solar Champions nationwide, which include state legislators, environmental and sustainability advocates, labor leaders, advocates for disadvantaged communities and farmers and agricultural groups.

Delaware’s Community Solar Champions include:

- **State Senator Stephanie Hansen (D-10)**, for her work to help fix community solar for the state of Delaware. Hansen convened stakeholder groups, helped people come to a consensus on language in the bill, and worked to garner support for the legislation, which passed both chambers with nearly unanimous support. Hansen is helping advance Delaware toward a future powered by more renewable energy.
- **Dustyn Thompson, Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator at the Sierra Club**, who rallied coalition members, drove meeting agendas and spoke publicly about the importance of community solar. He also served as a powerful ally on the regulatory front by ensuring draft regulations are appropriate for low- and moderate-income customers.

“It has been a privilege to work with Senator Hansen and Dustyn to update Delaware’s community solar program for the benefit of more residents,” said Laurel Passera, Delaware State Director for CCSA. “They have been steadfast in their efforts to develop a program that will expand access to solar energy for all and deliver its benefits to those who had been left out of participation. Together, we have developed a program that will serve low-income residents, create jobs, help to meet Delaware’s clean energy and climate goals, and create a stronger, more resilient energy grid by investing private capital in the state’s economy. I thank them for their commitment and hard work and am proud to honor them as CCSA 2021 Community Solar Champions.”

Through community solar, customers can enjoy equal access to the economic and environmental benefits of solar generation by subscribing to small local solar arrays. They then receive a credit on their utility bill for their share of the power that is produced, just as if the panels were on their own roof.

This is significant because more than 75 percent of American households don’t have access to solar power because they either rent, live in a multi-tenant building, or have roofs unable to host a solar system.

There are currently 21 states and the District of Columbia with policies in place that permit third-party community solar and multiple states advancing legislation to enable new programs.

In September 2021, Delaware enacted community solar legislation that updates existing state statute and will enable more residents and businesses to take advantage of renewable energy resources while generating income for participating landowners. [The bill](#), sponsored and shepherded by state Sen. Stephanie Hansen removes financial barriers to solar energy, and Delaware's bill requires that each community solar project serves at least 15 percent low-income customers, who might otherwise face challenges accessing renewable energy.

The legislative process began in earnest in 2021, when Hansen, who recently retired from a 20-year career as an environmental lawyer and became chair of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee, convened the first of several energy and climate forums in the state. By bringing together diverse voices, the coalition that formed was able to reach a consensus on an issue that has been contemplated for years.

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About Coalition for Community Solar Access

The Coalition for Community Solar Access is a national Coalition of businesses and non-profits working to expand customer choice and access to solar for all American households and businesses through community solar. Our mission is to empower every American energy consumer with the option to choose local, clean, and affordable community solar. We work with customers, utilities, local stakeholders, and policymakers to develop and implement policies and best practices that ensure community solar programs provide a win, win, win for all, starting with the customer. For more information, visit <https://www.communitysolaraccess.org> and follow the group on [Facebook](#).