

## **“Community Solar Champions” recognized in Illinois**

*Coalition for Community Solar Access honors individuals, organizations for dedication to advancing Illinois’ Community Solar Program*

Springfield, IL. (October 19, 2021) – The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is marking a year of significant growth and momentum for community solar by recognizing Illinois advocates for their work in 2021 supporting the strengthening of 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.

Illinois’ Community Solar Champions include::

- **State Senate President Pro Tempore Bill Cunningham (D-18)** for his work championing community solar and the renewable energy industry in Illinois since his election to the General Assembly in 2011. As a bill sponsor of Path to 100 and the lead negotiator of the recently passed omnibus legislation in the Senate, he is directly responsible for the expansion of the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and the expanded community solar program in Illinois.
- **State Representative William Davis (D-30)**, for his work as an advocate for community solar through the legislative process, acting as an important voice for equity and diversity in the solar industry and advocating for much-needed capacity for renewable energy development in the state. He was one of the initial bill sponsors for Path to 100, was the original author of the state’s diversity requirements for the energy sector, and his legislation created the framework for the recently enacted Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.
- **Pat Devaney**, for his work advocating for a pro-worker, pro-climate agenda. In his position as Secretary Treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO and Climate Jobs Illinois, Devaney advocates for a clean energy economy, creating good union jobs and supporting more equitable communities. Devaney was a key figure in the successful passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

“It has been a privilege to work with Senator Cunningham, Representative Davis, and Pat Devaney to expand Illinois’ community solar program for the benefit of more residents,” said Laurel Passera, Illinois 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 Illinois’ 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.

Illinois' recently passed omnibus energy package will usher in a broad expansion of the state's community solar program. The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act expands the Illinois community solar program to more than 1.5 gigawatts (GW) of solar power over the next decade, enough to power over 285,000 additional homes. The legislation brings long-term stability to Illinois' community solar program and will help the state develop a more equitable, low-cost, and carbon-neutral electric grid. Community solar is expected to play a major role in helping Illinois achieve the ambitious climate equity goals laid out within the legislation.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act makes a number of improvements to the state's existing community solar program. It expands the program's capacity from 213 megawatts (MW) to over 1.5 GW over the next decade. It transitions the project selection process from a random lottery with just a one in ten chance of success to a more orderly queue process that is based on project maturity, which will improve the speed of project development and grid interconnection. Finally, it enhances the bill savings for customers by standardizing the bill credit rate and by increasing allowable project size from two to five megawatts, which provides additional savings due to economies of scale.

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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](#).