

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

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

Annapolis, MD. (October 19, 2021) – The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is marking a year of significant growth and momentum for community solar by recognizing Maryland advocates for their work in 2021 to advance 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.

The Maryland Community Solar Champions include:

- **State Senator Benjamin Kramer (D-19)**, for his work to pass legislation enabling and pilot expansion community solar legislation and increasing all distributed generation opportunities in Maryland. His critical work in supporting continued development of a strong program that benefits all Marylanders and protects ratepayers has been instrumental in creating a market that works for all.
- **Delegate Luke Clippinger (D-46)**, for his leadership to establish Maryland’s Community Solar Pilot Program in 2016, expansion in 2019 and shepherding new opportunities for all distributed generation resources in Maryland. His support of expanding the program increases access to help more customers, especially low-income residents.
- **Delegate Benjamin Brooks (D-10)**, for his work to pass legislation enabling and pilot expansion community solar legislation in Maryland. His critical work in supporting continued development of a strong program that benefits all Marylanders and protects ratepayers has been instrumental in developing a market that works for all.
- **Dr. Alfred Bartlett of Chesapeake Physicians for Responsibility**, for his work to represent the public health and environmental health benefits of community solar programs. Dr. Bartlett is a retired pediatrician and public health physician and has testified in front of legislative committees and worked to educate the public about health benefits of improved air quality by reducing carbon emissions through renewable energy.

“It has been a privilege to work with Senator Kramer, Delegate Clippinger, Delegate Brooks and Dr. Bartlett on Maryland’s Community Solar Program,” said Leslie Elder, Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for CCSA. “From the passage of legislation establishing a community solar program to today, they have been steadfast in their efforts to develop a program that will expand access to solar energy and deliver its benefits to those who had been left out of participation. Together, we have developed a program that serves low-and-moderate income residents, helps to meet Maryland’s robust clean energy and climate goals, and creates a stronger, more resilient energy grid by investing private capital in Maryland’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.

Maryland's Community Solar Pilot Program is generating new renewable energy capacity that will help achieve the state's Renewable Portfolio Standards and carbon emission reduction goals. The enabling Community Solar Generating Systems act passed in 2016 and the Clean Energy Jobs Act 2019 of 2019 expanded the program by requiring half of Maryland's energy to come from renewable sources by 2030. Community solar is creating a whole new field of opportunity for all Marylanders to become part of the burgeoning clean energy economy.

During two hearings in late August, the Maryland Public Service Commission unanimously voted to expand the capacity of the state's community solar program as well as improve access for low and moderate income (LMI) customer participation in the state's Community Solar Pilot Program. The Commission's updates will allow community solar to power the equivalent of an additional 6,840 Maryland homes, annually.

The Commission made changes to the pilot program that will spur greater economic development from community solar and provide more customer energy savings.

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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](#).