

## **“Community Solar Champions” recognized in New Mexico**

*Coalition for Community Solar Access honors individuals, organizations for dedication to enabling New Mexico’s Community Solar Program*

Santa Fe, NM. (October 19, 2021) – The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is marking a year of significant growth and momentum for community solar by recognizing New Mexico legislators and advocates as Community Solar Champions for their work in passing community solar legislation in 2021. 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.

In New Mexico, Community Solar Champions include:

- **State Senator Liz Stefanics (D-39)** for her work as prime senate sponsor of New Mexico’s community solar legislation. In addition to being the primary bill sponsor, Stefanics enabled an interim working group during the 2020 legislative session creating a platform for discussing and developing the core elements of the 2021 bill across a diverse set of stakeholders.
- **State Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero (D-13)** for her work to pass community solar legislation in the New Mexico House. As the primary House sponsor, Caballero focused on maximizing equity and access to community solar for all New Mexicans.
- **Beth Beloff**, for her work as the leader of a local community solar coalition, organizing advocates around the successful passage of community solar legislation. Beloff serves as Executive Director of Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico.
- **Ben Shelton**, for his work as a core part of the local community solar coalition. Shelton, who serves as Political and Policy Director of Conservation Voters New Mexico, brought a wealth of institutional knowledge and experience getting things done in the Roundhouse to the group. His insights and influence were key in getting the legislation across the finish line.
- **Mayane Barudin**, formerly Interior West Director and Tribal Liaison with Vote Solar. Barudin is a Tribal member of Kewa Pueblo in New Mexico and worked to advance economic opportunity and equality for Native American communities across the state by advocating for the passage of community solar legislation with key provisions supporting their participation in community solar projects.

“It has been a privilege to work with Senator Stefanics, Representative Royal Caballero, Beth, Ben and Mayane to bring community solar to New Mexico residents and businesses,” said Kevin Cray, Mountain West Director for CCSA. “From past attempts to pass 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 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, help to meet New Mexico'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.

Enacted in 2021, New Mexico was the 21st state to adopt a Community Solar Program. Projects are capped at 5 MW and will expand access to community solar to disadvantaged communities, with a carve out of 30 percent of capacity per project dedicated to low-income customers and service organizations.

###

### ***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](#).