

“Community Solar Champions” recognized in Pennsylvania

Coalition for Community Solar Access honors individuals, organizations for dedication to enabling a Community Solar Program

Harrisburg, Pa. (October 19, 2021) – The Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) is marking a year of significant growth and momentum for community solar by recognizing Pennsylvania advocates for their work in 2021 supporting the development of a community solar program in the commonwealth. 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 Pennsylvania, Community Solar Champions include:

- **Darrin Youker, Director of State Government Affairs for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.** The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is a member of the Pennsylvania Community Solar Economic Alliance and has been a steadfast supporter of making the benefits of community solar available to farmers, who can generate a steady source of income by leasing their land to a small, local solar array. Youker has been a critical steward of the interests of the farming community in developing legislation to bring a community solar program to Pennsylvania, including siting, decommissioning and bonding.
- **[Paul Mason](#), owner of Mason Farms in Pennsylvania and Maryland.** Mason is a fourth generation farmer with community solar on seven acres of his land in Maryland who has been working to educate legislators and fellow farmers about the benefits community solar can deliver to Pennsylvania farmers if legislation is passed to enable the program in the commonwealth. He has testified in front of legislative committees, participated in educational videos and provided key feedback about legislative development.

“It has been a privilege to work with Darrin and Paul to bring the benefits of community solar to Pennsylvanians,” said Leslie Elder, Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for CCSA. “They have both dedicated tremendous time, effort and energy to develop and support community solar legislation that would expand access to solar and power our economy. Together, we have developed a proposal that will create more choices for energy and modernize our grid by investing private capital in Pennsylvania’s economy and create economic opportunity for our agricultural community. 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 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.

House Bill 1555 and Senate Bill 472 would generate a [\\$1.8 billion stimulus](#) for the commonwealth's economy and provide financial relief for farmers, landowners, and consumers. The legislation would allow [over 230 community solar projects](#) to move forward across 48 Pennsylvania counties, including rural, suburban and urban areas. The projects are expected to save Pennsylvanians who subscribe over \$30 million annually.

HB 1555 and SB 472 also contain the first-ever prevailing wage requirement included in a Pennsylvania solar bill. [A Penn State economic study](#) found that community solar projects are projected to create 12,000 total jobs in the commonwealth across various industries, including construction.

[Close to 80 percent of Pennsylvanians](#) want the option to participate in community solar projects and 60 percent claim they would subscribe if a project were available to them, according to a recent poll conducted by Susquehanna Polling & Research.

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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](#).