COMMUNITY SOLAR: READY TO WORK FOR MAINE

Jobs and Economic Impact Assessment

Affordable solar energy is giving families, businesses, schools, and many others a way to lower energy bills and invest in the new energy economy. Community solar gives customers a way to go solar and save for the first time. It also expands access to solar for all, including low-to-moderate income customers, all while building a stronger, greener, and more resilient electric grid. The community solar program in *An Act To Promote Solar Energy Projects and Distributed Generation Resources* (LD 1711) is the state's opportunity to help people, businesses, and communities in every corner of the state to lower their energy costs by increasing solar power and creating 553 new, good-quality jobs.

Maine can expect the following benefits from 250 MW of community solar installed between 2020 – 2024

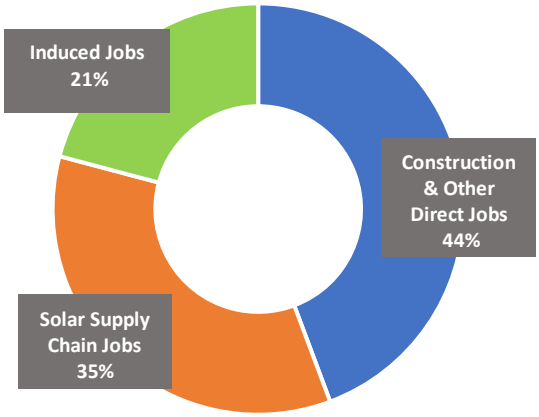
Economic Benefits

250 MW of community solar would **serve approximately 18,100 customers**[1], bringing access to many who have not been early solar adopters in the state.

An 87% increase in solar jobs, **553 sustained full-time jobs** during construction.

$157 million in earnings for those employed, or approximately $27/hour.

Job Creation By Sector



$323.5 million in local economic benefits for the state, excepting local tax revenues.

The above statistics yield an average of $19.6 million/year of economic benefit *each year* during the 25-year minimum life of 250 MWs of community solar in the program (LD 1711).

[1] Assumes the program serves 50% residential and small commercial customers and 50% large customers, with 17,857 small customers having an average subscription size of 7kW and 250 large customers having subscription sizes of 500 kW.

To understand the benefits associated with this legislation, the Coalition for Community Solar Access used the Jobs and Economic Impact (JEDI) model developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to reasonably estimate the employment, earnings and economic impacts from the construction and operation of these community solar energy facilities. NREL's Solar Photovoltaic (PV) JEDI model has been used extensively by decision makers to assess the expected impacts of solar energy projects, proposed programs and policy decisions.

Methodology

The JEDI model assesses the job, earnings and economic impacts derived from the 250 MW Large Scale Distributed Shared Resources Procurement Program proposed in LD 1711. Direct, indirect, and induced impacts to employment, earnings and economic impacts were calculated. Employment impact figures typically represent full-time equivalents (FTE), or 2080-hour units of labor (job years). However, it is assumed that solar jobs will be maintained over the initial 5-years of the program period, thereby making these sustained jobs. Earnings reflect wages, salary compensation, and benefits paid to workers. Economic output refers to economic activity or the value of production in the state or local economy, and it is reported in 2020 dollars.

NREL's JEDI model calculates jobs, earnings, and output distributed across three categories:

- Direct Impacts. Direct impacts arise from on-site labor and professional services such as solar project development, design, permitting, construction, and labor. These results include labor only—no materials.
- Indirect Impacts. Investments into solar projects stimulate economic impacts in industries outside of onsite construction and maintenance activities. Indirect impacts refer to changes in local revenue and industry impacts across the PV supply chain.
- Induced Impacts. Induced impacts result from reinvestment in the local economy and spending of earnings by direct and indirect beneficiaries of solar projects. Examples of induced impacts include money spent on restaurants, gas and groceries.

Direct, indirect and induced jobs and economic benefits were captured from the following:

- Employment Impacts During Construction: Solar installations require significant upfront private investment in capital and labor and would represent a majority of the jobs created by the state's action on LD 1711.
- Earnings from a Statewide Shared Resources Program: A robust community solar program would support tremendous earnings potential among Maine's citizens. Solar installation, operations and maintenance jobs are well-paying jobs, and significantly above minimum wage.
- Economic Output in Maine's Economy: The construction and operation of community solar facilities results in several economic impacts, which when combined into a currency metric, demonstrates the total economic output of near-term project development.

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