



June 19, 2015 | For Immediate Distribution
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Peninsula Cities Help Residents Pool Buying Power for Solar

Community Discount Program Makes Going Solar Easier, More Affordable for Homeowners

Palo Alto, CA – June 19, 2015 - On Sunday, June 21, the longest day of the year, millions of Americans will celebrate solar energy as part of National #PutSolarOnIt Day of Action. In honor of National #PutSolarOnIt Day of Action, organizers of a new Peninsula solar group-buy program have extended the deadline for enrollment. The Peninsula SunShares program pools the purchasing power of residents to lower the cost of installing solar. The program is helping area residents turn their support into real-world action by making it easier and more affordable to put solar on their own rooftops.

“Solar is our nation’s fastest growing source of new electric generation, but many homeowners still feel overwhelmed by the process or cost of installing it at their home. That’s why Palo Alto has teamed up with neighboring communities to offer Peninsula SunShares and make it easy for residents to connect with affordable solar power,” said Palo Alto Utilities Director Valerie Fong. “This discounted solar group-buy program supports the City’s climate protection goals and is part of our Local Solar Plan for increasing local renewable energy generation.”

Peninsula SunShares is an innovative residential solar group purchasing program that helps neighbors navigate the process of going solar together. More than a dozen Peninsula cities have partnered with the non-profit organization, Vote Solar, to offer this discount to local homeowners. Qualified homeowners start by receiving a no-cost, no-obligation site evaluation to determine if their home is suitable for solar. Homeowners can then choose to work with local solar installers, Sunrun, Inc. or Skytech Solar, which were both selected by the program’s community evaluation committee. Allowing these solar installers to serve customers in bulk enables them to offer discounted pricing.

Peninsula SunShares offers solar pricing starting at 15% below the average market rate. Area residents must sign up with the program administrator, Vote Solar, by July 31 to take advantage of the discounted pricing. The City of Palo Alto is leading enrollment with more than 225 registrants, or close to 50% of the total participation. Other participating communities include Belmont, Brisbane, Burlingame, Daly City, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Redwood City, San Carlos and San Mateo.

“Peninsula SunShares is helping communities build awareness, lower solar costs, and lead on climate action in one fell swoop. We are proud to be working with these cities to help their residents ‘put solar on it’ and build a better energy system, one rooftop at a time,” said Jessie Denver, Vote Solar’s Group Energy program director.

Previous SunShares programs in the San Francisco Bay Area have resulted in more than 340 homeowners going solar at prices below the average market rate. These systems total 1.5 megawatts (MW) of new local solar capacity, reducing electricity costs for participants and delivering economic, health and environmental benefits community-wide.

About Vote Solar: Vote Solar is a non-profit grassroots organization working to foster economic opportunity, promote energy independence and address climate change by making solar a mainstream energy resource across the United States. Learn more at votesolar.org

About the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU): The City of Palo Alto is the only municipality in California operating a full suite of utility services. For more on Palo Alto’s solar programs, visit cityofpaloalto.org/solar