

Mary Beth Murphy

From: Carmen Santos <carmen@sustainablewestchester.org>
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2020 8:07 AM
To: Mayor Armacost
Cc: Mary Beth Murphy; Nina Orville
Subject: Letter of Support Request - Community Solar Program for Low Income Households
Attachments: LoS for NYSERDA PON 3414 - Template.docx

Dear Mayor Armacost:

We are writing to request a Letter of Support from the Village of Hastings for Sustainable Westchester's ground-breaking new program - Opt-Out Community Solar - to be launched in 2021. **We have attached a template letter. If you could please sign and email it back to us by Thursday, September 24th at 12:00 p.m. (noon), we would appreciate it immensely.**

Sustainable Westchester is responding to NYSERDA's PON 3414, Affordable Solar and Storage Predevelopment and Technical Assistance. This grant funding will be critical to facilitate this program implementation, allowing thousands of low income residents across 27 Westchester Power member municipalities, previously excluded from solar benefits, to participate in our renewable energy program on an opt-out basis.

Low income New Yorkers pay a disproportionate share of their income for energy costs – 12.9% compared to 2.4% for those who are not. The low income households enrolled in our program will see consistent financial savings (up to 10% of electricity costs), thus reducing their disproportionate energy burden, while lowering greenhouse gas emissions and particulate pollution, and creating new clean energy jobs.

Your support will bolster our submission to NYSERDA for this grant funding and ensure this program is made available to those that need it most. **We would appreciate that you sign the attached Letter of Support template - on your letterhead - and email to Nina Orville (nina@sustainablewestchester.org) by Thursday, September 24th at 12:00 p.m. (noon).**

Please reach out with any questions you have about our upcoming Opt-Out Community Solar program or this letter. We are grateful for your assistance and thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Carmen Santos
Outreach Coordinator
Sustainable Westchester

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carmen@sustainablewestchester.org

40 Green Street
Mount Kisco, NY 10549

[DATE]

Attn: PON 3414
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

Re: [NAME / TITLE]'s Support for the Westchester Power Community Solar Opt-Out Program

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for Sustainable Westchester's proposal, submitted under NYSEDA PON 3414, Affordable Solar and Storage Predevelopment and Technical Assistance. Sustainable Westchester, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, whose membership is comprised of forty-four Westchester municipalities, has developed a plan to provide community solar savings to those who need it most, low-income residents and members of environmental justice communities, on an opt-out basis.

Funding will allow Sustainable Westchester to deliver opt-out community solar through the organization's ground-breaking Westchester Power program, New York State's first community choice aggregation program, in which twenty-seven municipalities currently participate. As there is insufficient solar capacity to serve all Westchester residents, low-income residents in Westchester Power communities will be prioritized. Low income New Yorkers pay a disproportionate share of their income for energy costs – 12.9% compared to 2.4% for those who are not low income. Those who are enrolled in this program will benefit by saving up to 10% of their electricity costs while helping lower greenhouse gas emissions and particulate pollution, and creating new clean energy jobs.

Low income residents have traditionally been excluded from solar benefits. They are less likely to be able to install solar on their own homes. Even community solar, which makes solar more accessible, has not yet been optimized for low income resident participation. Sustainable Westchester's opt-out plan takes advantage of regulatory changes nearing implementation, including consolidated billing, that remove barriers to participation by lower income people. Leveraging the power of the Westchester Power program to function as an opt-out program will make it possible to efficiently extend these benefits to low-income residents.

Sustainable Westchester's proposal for the Opt-Out Community Solar program will include significant outreach to municipal leaders and community organizations. Sustainable Westchester will solicit feedback on a methodology to prioritize inclusion in the opt-out program and obtain feedback on communication strategies and approaches. In addition, we will launch community-based marketing campaigns in selected communities to increase awareness of the program.

In addition to leveraging the structure of Westchester Power, the proposed Community Solar Opt-Out program builds on Sustainable Westchester's current Community Solar program, launched in 2018, which has seen about 1,000 enrollments across Westchester County with the active support of community groups and municipalities.

I support the goals of NYSEDA PON 3414 and Sustainable Westchester's commitment to increasing the accessibility of renewable energy benefits for low-income residents and those living in environmental

justice areas in Westchester through this program. I look forward to working with Sustainable Westchester to promote the growth of community solar access for low income households in Westchester County.

Respectfully submitted,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[SIGNATURE]