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## **Extensible Energy Launches U.S. Department of Energy Funded Project To Accelerate Community-Shared Solar Program Growth**

**Jan. 29, 2015, Lafayette, Calif.** -- Extensible Energy, a San Francisco-area energy consulting and analytics firm, will engage Sacramento (California) Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Albuquerque, New Mexico-based PNM, and other utilities nationwide in the development and build-out of a new business model for community-shared solar projects. The U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative will fund the 2.5-year effort, focused on boosting the overall energy-production value and market competitiveness of community solar. The project joins 14 other projects selected nationwide under SunShot's Solar Market Pathways program to help communities develop multi-year solar deployment plans, demonstrating a range of strategies to install affordable solar electricity for homes, and businesses, and communities.

According to John Powers, Extensible Energy CEO, "This project will take solutions that utilities have proven on a limited scale and combine them in the most cost-effective, appealing, and replicable ways possible. We're going to develop a playbook for more solar, faster, and with less risk to utility service reliability and overall customer satisfaction." Extensible Energy will work in partnership with technical, marketing, and utility-industry experts from Cliburn and Associates, LLC, Olivine, Inc., and Navigant Consulting. Total project funding is \$800,000.

Community-shared solar refers to any solar project that has multiple co-owners, lease-holders, or subscribers, where each carries a small portion of the total project cost and shares proportionally in the benefits. Community solar is an alternative to rooftop solar, especially for the majority of customers who do not have a suitable site or who are not ready, for whatever reason, to invest in a typical rooftop solar system. Utilities that sponsor community solar programs pay participants for the energy that is generated by their share of the system, and often they provide other benefits, such as technical design support, financing, and maintenance. There were more than 50 community solar projects in at least 17 states by mid-2013, and customer interest continues to grow. Yet most individual community solar projects are very small and few take advantage of market-ready innovations that could improve long-term project value and lower participating customers' costs.

This High-Value Integrated Community Solar Project will address those issues and help the SunShot Initiative reach overall solar energy cost-reduction goals. Working in multiple utility markets, the project will present solid ways to prioritize community-shared solar sites, to design for greater solar value, and to incorporate companion measures, such as advanced load management (demand-response) and thermal or battery storage into the program design. Such measures can directly address solar variability, so more costly distribution-engineering solutions and the cost of regional-level grid-management services can be minimized.

Part of the project will be to create the basis for each utility's customer offer, but that might include the chance for residential and commercial participants to sign up for bonus payments or other incentives from the utility to use advanced load management on their equipment and appliances, or to incorporate on-site energy storage, so energy demand falls more in line with the available solar resource. "Customers' energy choices really can make a difference. Not only would these community solar participants share in the benefits of a specific solar project, but they would engage directly with the utility to make sure solar works at scale—technically, economically, and sustainably for the community," Powers says.

SMUD will be the primary utility to provide a real-world test-case for the high-value community solar planning, followed by PNM and at least one more utility from a diverse group of interested utilities nationwide. The project aims to trigger at least 20 megawatts (MW) of high-value community solar in the next two to five years, and thousands more MW over the next decade.

For details on the SunShot Initiative announcement of all new program awardees, see <http://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-more-59-million-investment-solar>.

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The [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative](#) is a collaborative national effort that aggressively drives innovation to make solar energy fully cost-competitive with traditional energy sources before the end of the decade. Through SunShot, the Energy Department supports efforts by private companies, universities, and national laboratories to drive down the cost of solar electricity to \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour. Learn more at [energy.gov/sunshot](http://energy.gov/sunshot).

Extensible Energy is an energy consulting and analytics firm that delivers market insights and advanced technology solutions for energy suppliers, energy customers, and third-party market participants. With more than three decades of experience in electricity markets, EE management and staff bring entrepreneurial expertise to today's issues of renewables integration, demand response programs, customer engagement, and multiple areas of utility economics. See [www.extensibleenergy.com](http://www.extensibleenergy.com).

Cliburn and Associates, LLC is focused on identifying and replicating best practices and innovation in utility clean-energy, including solar and wind, load management, demand response, and energy efficiency. Led by Santa Fe, New Mexico-based industry veteran Jill K. Cliburn, the firm serves utilities nationwide, their associations, research agencies, and communities in search of collaborative, sustainable energy solutions. See [www.cliburnenergy.com](http://www.cliburnenergy.com).

Navigant (NYSE: NCI) is a specialized, global expert services firm dedicated to assisting clients in creating and protecting value in the face of critical business risks and opportunities. Through senior level engagement with clients, Navigant professionals provide services that extend from expert and advisory work through implementation and outsourcing. The firm combines deep technical expertise in Disputes and Investigations, Economics, Financial Advisory and Management Consulting, with business pragmatism to address clients' needs in highly regulated industries including construction, energy, financial services and healthcare. See [navigant.com](http://navigant.com).

Olivine, Inc. supports the creation of a clean energy economy, providing the infrastructure and expertise for distributed energy resources to provide a variety of needed grid services at both the distribution and transmission levels. Olivine supports utilities, third parties and other industry participants focusing on the efficient and effective participation of new technologies and solutions. See <http://olivineinc.com>