



# Solar Sebastopol

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Solar Sebastopol wins grant to expand countywide**

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**Sebastopol, CA** – Solar Sebastopol has received a \$73,000 grant to expand its community solar energy program to a countywide effort to be called Solar Sonoma County. On December 19, 2007, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board of Directors awarded \$3 million in Climate Protection Grants to San Francisco Bay Area local governments and nonprofits for implementation of innovative projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Solar Sonoma County (SSC) is envisioned as a regional program, modeled after the highly successful Solar Sebastopol program, to promote and stimulate the generation of clean, renewable, cost-effective solar photovoltaic (PV) and solar thermal energy to supply more of Sonoma County's energy needs. SSC will support the Sonoma County Supervisors' and the County's nine cities' commitments to their aggressive 2015 greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets by developing a countywide solar implementation plan with elements to encourage and facilitate widespread adoption of solar energy for building related public, commercial, industrial, and residential electricity, addressing a major source of carbon emissions in this county.

“This is a phenomenal step forward toward a more sustainable future for Sonoma County that was birthed right here in Sebastopol,” says Sebastopol Mayor Craig Litwin. “Solar Sebastopol began in 2002 in partnership with students from Sonoma State University. This award provides the financial support for successfully linking up with other communities to expand the use of clean, renewable solar energy on a regional level.”

The Solar Sonoma County grant proposal ranked fifth overall out of more than 80 funding applications submitted. The Air District originally planned to award \$1.5 million in funds but raised the total award amount due to the overwhelming response as evidence of the tremendous interest in pursuing climate protection and the need for this type of funding. The agency “was impressed by response to this grant program, the high level of creativity and innovation in the applications, and the demonstration of

leadership our region is providing for the rest of the country,” according to the Air District announcement.

Solar Sonoma County objectives as outlined in the Air District grant proposal include:

- Addressing the cost barriers for municipal and residential solar through development of or partnership with a scalable, replicable market-based financing model.
- Providing a central clearinghouse for local government policies and best practices to encourage solar installation.
- Encouraging energy efficiency and conservation measures to reduced overall electricity demand.
- Conducting an ongoing public education and marketing campaign to promote solar energy.

SSC is seeking the direct involvement of all of Sonoma County’s cities, the County Government, solar industry stakeholders, and other interested business, organizations, and individuals as part of a membership organization that collectively will determine the overarching vision, refine program goals, and develop and direct specific projects. The California Energy Commission, Senator Pat Wiggins, Assemblymember Patty Berg, Pacific Gas & Electric, and the Green Energy Loan program support SSC.

In November, an ad hoc group of representatives from numerous municipalities in Sonoma County, solar energy companies, labor groups, and PG&E began meeting and formed an SSC Steering Committee to move forward with a countywide solar effort.

### **About Solar Sebastopol**

Established in 2002, Solar Sebastopol is a local first-of-its-kind program to encourage more solar energy on residential, business, and public properties in Sebastopol. The program’s is to install 1 megawatt of solar power production in Sebastopol, equivalent to solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on about 500 average-size homes. From the outset, Solar Sebastopol garnered national and international media attention as the first community solar program of its kind. The program has served as a model of innovation for smaller communities that initially were looking for ways to increase local control over energy costs

As of July 2007, Sebastopol has installed 400,000 watts (400 kW) of solar within city limits, or 40% of the 1-megawatt (1,000 kW) goal, with 105.5 kW installed on City of Sebastopol properties. This year the City of Sebastopol received three awards from the NorCal Solar Energy Association in 2007 for installing more PV watts per capita than other small communities in the greater Bay Area. More than 1.4 Megawatts of solar PV has been installed in the greater Sebastopol area.

For more information about Solar Sebastopol, visit [www.solarsebastopol.com](http://www.solarsebastopol.com) or call (707) 823-1153.

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