



# Low Income and Other Underserved Communities Solar Opportunities

VECAN Conference 2020

# Our Goal for Vermont



***Provide underserved communities EQUAL and SUSTAINABLE access to clean energy benefits***

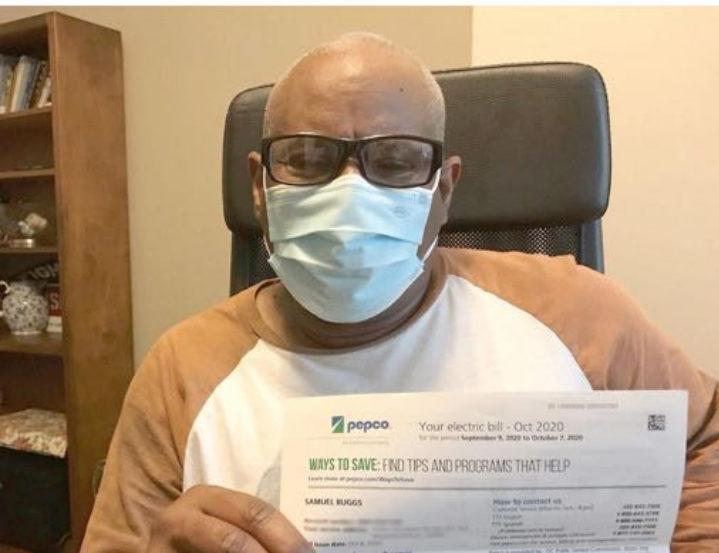


# Commonality of Underserved Communities

- **Lack of access to UPFRONT capital**
  - Solar, weatherization, EVs...cost money
- **Tax credits are of less value**
  - EVs and Solar incentivized by tax credits
- **Lack of credit history or assets** to get loan
- **Rent, safety issues in home** need addressing, ...
- **Overlooked** by the “market” in general
- **Lack of “Single Point”** aggregator increase cost
- **Complex** affordable housing ownership structure



# Other States and the Impact of Acting



**DC - “Solar for All” initiative providing solar to reduce 50% of electric bill for 100,000 residents.** Buggs said the credit on his power bill means he **can afford to buy a couple of extra meals every month or pay another bill he’d been putting off.**

**MA – Increased incentives and Loan Loss Reserve funds to encourage ownership – yet while low-income families represent about 30% of residential customers in Massachusetts, but only 3% of recent solar customers.**

**VT – No specific statewide Low Income Solar program**

An Efficiency Vermont Program a few years ago replaced old refrigerators for Low Income Vermonters – Two quotes that stay with you:

- “I don’t have to go to the store everyday because my food doesn’t spoil” Elderly Vermonter
- “I don’t have to keep my daughter’s medicine in a cooler anymore”



**NH – Sporadic residential owned community (ROC) program, with historic lack of funds, but targeting underserved groups.**



## ***One small 2020 Vermont Success story:***

In 2020 NT over 50% of Norwich Solar installations' output went to Low-income residents with 25-year commitments to provide

- **First year savings of approximately \$110,000**
- **Lifetime savings of \$3,800,000**

### **Why did this work?**

- Affordable Housing agencies consolidate transactions
- We intentionally focused on underserved communities
- We found willing finance partners and banks
- Offsite 150kW and 500kW solar arrays – less risk, lower cost
- Discounts on bills versus buy – NO CAPITAL REQUIRED
- Owner utilizes tax credit to provide discount

**Future Challenges – VT Net-metering rates drop nearly 25% starting Feb 1, 2021 and Federal Tax Incentive drops 15%.**

- A loss of > \$140,000 if we did these projects again

# Community Approach and “Interconnectedness”

**We need to see the problem and opportunity on a broader, more SUSTAINABLE scale.**

- Let's value Societal Benefits of jobs, correcting inequities, carbon reduction, health improvements, further benefits through Electric vehicles or heat pumps



# Impact, Synergies, and Opportunities at the Community Level



## Lifetime Farm Savings:

\$136,250.00

## Lifetime Property / School Benefit:

\$44,100.00

## Reclamation Benefits:

\$35,000.00



# Economic Development – Reclaimed Industrial Site Supports Local School and Jobs



**Lifetime School Savings:**  
\$123,750.00

**Lifetime Property /  
School Tax Benefit:**  
\$57,750.00

**Reclamation Benefit:**  
\$25,000.00

# Ideas on What WE Can Do

Talk with your legislator about the need to **prioritize Clean Energy Solutions for Low- and Moderate-Income (LMI)**

## **Vermonters**

- Cheap, clean local electricity **enables electric vehicles and heat pump options** for LMI Vermonters
- **Remove the net metering cap of 500kW** for non-profits which includes LMI housing organizations and towns
- **Flexible Green Bank structure** to support clean LMI projects

Engage the Administration (Governor's office, Public Utilities Commission, Public Service Department)

- As opposed to slowing Net Metering through compensation reductions to protect LMI Vermonter's – how do we actually engage and create the benefits – **how we approach is our choice as a state**
- **Evaluate programs from the community perspective** – ratepayers are taxpayers are job seekers are citizens already paying for impacts of climate change

# Ideas on What WE Can Do

## **Look for projects, sites, customers in your community that benefit LMI Vermonters**

- Work with your local solar contractor, LMI agency, Housing Agency... in your area to fulfill
- Identify a LMI rooftop opportunity before Feb 1 drop in Net Metering (work with your local solar contractor)

## **Connect the needs of LMI Vermonters and Climate Solutions through real community experiences**

- Stories over Statistics



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