

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Announces Opening of Year 2 of the Community Solar Program

On October 2, 2020, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (Board) announced the opening of the second year of the Community Solar Program (PY2) as well as various changes from Program Year 1 (PY1) of the program. The Board stated that during PY2 it will expand the program capacity from 75MWs to 150MWs - 60MWs of which will be set aside for low and moderate income (LMI) subscribers. The deadline for the submission of applications is February 5, 2021.

The Community Solar Program is mandated by the Clean Energy Act of 2018 and is intended to make renewable energy accessible and affordable to LMI customers and to Environmental Justice Communities. In 2019, the Board commenced the Community Solar Program by establishing a three year "pilot program" to develop community solar projects of at least 75MWs per year. Under the Community Solar Program, residential and commercial customers that lack sufficient space for the installation of solar photovoltaic equipment to generate electricity for their own consumption can enter into a subscriber agreement that enables them to purchase electricity generated by solar facilities located on other properties.

Solar developers throughout New Jersey have shown widespread interest in the program. During PY1, 252 applications were submitted to the Board. In December 2019, the Board approved 45 applications consisting of 78MWs - all of which will serve a subscriber base where more than 51% of the subscribers are LMI customers.

After conducting stakeholder "lessons learned" sessions regarding PY1, the Board determined to make various modifications for PY2, including the following:

The PY2 criteria for evaluating applications and awarding project approvals will generally track that used in PY1. Applications will be reviewed and scored based on evaluation criteria that includes:

Project applications must receive a minimum of 50 points to be considered, and will be awarded capacity in descending order beginning with the highest-scoring project in each electric utility's territory.

The **application form for PY2** is available on the BPU Office of Clean Energy website.

We will continue to monitor the Board's implementation of the New Jersey Community Solar Program and will provide timely updates regarding new developments. Please contact the author of this Alert, **Barbara J. Koonz**, bkoonz@greenbaumlaw.com | 973.577.1894 with questions. Ms. Koonz is Chair of the firm's **Energy, Renewable Resources & Sustainable Development Practice Group**.

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