



## **A \$1 billion plan to provide integrated solar energy for low-income renters**

SAN FRANCISCO

August 4, 2016 9:03pm

The California Public Utilities Commission is being urged to spend up to \$1 billion from the state's cap-and-trade tax to pay for solar energy systems to benefit low-income renters.

The plan is backed by the California Housing Partnership, California Environmental Justice Alliance, Brightline Defense Project, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the National Housing Law Project.

Last year's Assembly Bill 693 authorized the use of utility cap-and-trade auction revenue to fund solar energy systems on affordable multifamily rental properties in California.

"This is our opportunity to make clean energy a reality for all Californians," says Matt Schwartz, president and CEO of the California Housing Partnership. "This plan will ensure low-income renters — which comprise a huge percentage of California's population — are able to enjoy the benefits of improved energy efficiency and solar energy."

The Multifamily Solar Roofs Program (AB 693) is a response to the gap in the level of solar installations serving low-income renters and disadvantaged communities. When operational in 2017, it will be the first program in the country specifically designed to provide low-income renters with increased access to the electricity generated from on-site solar energy systems and direct economic benefits from solar credits allocated to each low-income household. The Solar Roofs Program will bring integrated solar energy benefits to more than 150,000 low-income renter households over the next ten years.

The joint proposal requests that the CPUC adopt an integrated energy strategy combining energy efficiency, solar PV, and energy storage devices to reduce energy use, peak load demands, and costs, and advance utility efforts to transition to a smarter energy grid.

Further, the joint proposal requests special efforts to target solar energy systems installations in disadvantaged communities and to provide job opportunities in low-income and disadvantaged communities. The plan also recommends that an independent, state-wide administrator run the program to improve on the performance of past solar energy programs.

“This is a landmark plan nationally,” says Lewis Milford, president of Clean Energy Group, a nonprofit that advised the groups in the development of the plan on issues including energy storage. “It is critical to bend the technology curve of new technologies like solar and storage to benefit low-income tenants and housing developers now, not years from now. They shouldn’t have to wait for years for reduced electric bills and cleaner air from these new technologies.”

A final decision by the CPUC is expected later this year.