



Go Solar, California! Newsletter - December 2011

Solar Toolbox

California Leads the Nation

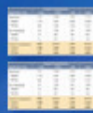
103,688	solar projects
1,034	megawatts installed
\$8.19	avg cost/watt <10kW
\$7.17	avg cost/watt >10kW

last updated: 12.07.11

[More stats...](#)



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Recently, the Single-family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) Program topped the 1,000th milestone installation of solar PV systems since 2009. This represents roughly 3 megawatts of installed capacity for low-income families. Because every SASH installation includes workforce development, this represent some 180,000 hours of hands-on experience for trainees, volunteers and community members. Read on for more solar news and important updates from CSI Program Administrators.

Program Forum

Jan. 25, 2012
Pacific Energy Center
San Francisco
Details will be available in January's newsletter.

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CPUC Augments CSI Program Budget

On December 1, 2011, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved a decision to increase the budget for the California Solar Initiative (CSI) Program by \$200 million in order to



cover a budget shortfall. The action implements Senate Bill (SB) 585 signed by Governor Jerry Brown on Sept. 22, 2011.

The bill requires that the CSI program direct the program funds' accumulated interest to the incentives fund and collect the remaining needed funds by extending at the end of the program the CSI ratepayer surcharge. The amount Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE) and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) are allowed to collect to fund the CSI program is modified as follows:

- PG&E: \$114 million
- SCE: \$64 million
- SDG&E \$22 million

The bill also changes the formula used to calculate the per-kWh payments (performance-based incentives, or PBI) by reducing the discount factor (from 8 percent to 4 percent) used to reflect inflation over time. As a result, some PBI payment rates for new applications will be lowered.

CSI Program Administrators

[California Center for Sustainable Energy](#)

[Pacific Gas and Electric Company](#)

[Southern California Edison](#)

[California Public Utilities Commission](#)

[Go Solar, California! Web site](#)

Finally, the bill mandates that the CPUC establish caps on the total cost of projects funded through the CSI. The program already has such caps in place and the CPUC will continue to monitor and adjust them over time.

CPUC President Michael R. Peevey said, "I'd like to thank Senator Christine Kehoe for authoring SB 585, which gave us the authority to add \$200 million to the CSI incentive budget. California's endeavor to expand the use of solar as an alternative source of energy has been so successful that, over the course of the California Solar Initiative's five-year existence, the CPUC has had to make budgetary adjustments on numerous occasions. Today's adjustment is just another testament to the continually growing interest in solar across the state."

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Cross Promotion



CSI Marks Another Great Year for Solar: A 2011 Snapshot

The solar industry is nothing if not tumultuous, something to be expected in a high-growth sector. Like no other year, 2011 had winners and losers — in some cases, painfully obvious to the entire nation. Before settling in for a holiday break, the *Go Solar, California!* team wants to provide a quick snapshot of the CSI program's performance in 2011, because from our perspective, this has been an incredible year for solar in California.

2011 Milestones

In October, California hit a milestone of 1,000 megawatts — one gigawatt — of distributed solar PV installed across 100,000 locations in California, over 60 percent of which can be attributed to the CSI Program.

Around the state, 2011 saw more than 20,000 PV systems installed with a capacity of 241 MW and \$283 million in incentives. The vast majority of these projects are smaller systems installed for homeowners at over 19,000 sites that add up to 93 MW of clean, renewable power. Larger non-residential systems, at about 866 sites, delivered 149 MW of solar power to the grid in 2011.

Homeowners received \$67 million in solar rebates from CSI, while the non-residential sector collected \$267 million in performance-based incentives.

2011 CSI Program Improvements

The solar market in California also saw positives in terms of CSI program improvements. The state legislature added \$200 million to the CSI program budget, bringing renewed activity to the waitlisted non-residential program in both Northern and Southern California.

In July, the California Public Utilities Commission adopted a decision to implement [Phase 1 CSI Program Modifications](#), bringing about numerous program changes to virtual net metering and inspection requirements and expanding low-income solar programs.

The CSI-Thermal Program added a \$25 million [low-income incentive](#) for qualifying single-family and multifamily residences to the program and added [propane-displacing technologies](#) to the eligibility list for solar thermal incentives.

Rates for net surplus compensation were established in a long-awaited commission [decision](#) to implement Assembly Bill 920 (Huffman, 2009), allowing solar system owners and other net energy metering customers to get paid for excess generation.

New Customer Resources

The California Solar Statistics website, home of all CSI data, continues to increase functionality



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with new features and data sets such as the [Find a Contractor](#) search tool and the [Solar Advantage Value Estimator](#), which allows people to determine the net present value of a PV system including annual energy savings. CSI Program Administrators made strides in developing customer-integrated solar tools, such as [PG&E's Solar Calculator](#) and the [Electric Rates Analyzer](#) from the California Center for Sustainable Energy. These online tools help customers understand their specific financial benefits of going solar and make energy efficiency assessments for a more robust solar package.

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PG&E's Year-End Interconnection Update

With the end of the year fast approaching and continued growth in the solar industry, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) would like to provide you some important updates on our interconnection status. In PG&E's service territory, completed interconnections for 2011 are almost 33% ahead of our record setting pace in 2010. Through September alone, we have already successfully interconnected 9,485 NEM projects.

If you filed your completed Net Energy Metering (NEM) application by Nov. 23, you can anticipate project interconnected by the end of the year. As we have seen in past years, the installation of the bi-directional meters and release of the permission to operate letter can be impacted by conditions out of our control such as storms and wet weather that impede the safe interconnection of systems. However, please be assured that we will continue to work to get projects interconnected as quickly as we can and we appreciate your cooperation in this.

Please note: If your project requires a change in the equipment or facilities serving your PV system, PG&E may not be able to complete your nonsimplified interconnection by December 31 due to the ordering and installation of equipment needed for the specified changes. We will work to provide you with the latest project information as early in the interconnection process as possible.

The [PG&E CSI](#) team appreciates your patience and looks forward to working with you to provide a strong finish to another record-breaking year.

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SCE's Year-End Interconnection Update

This past year has been the busiest year to date for Southern California Edison's Net Energy Metering (NEM) Interconnection team, with nearly 9,000 projects authorized so far — a 40% increase over the 2010 total. As promised, SCE is on track to issue permission to operate letters for projects that submitted initial paperwork by November 4 and final inspection approval by December 1.

SCE attributes better interconnection efficiencies to CSI program streamlining in 2011, such as the publication of a NEM Interconnection handbook and additional on-line training resources for those completing interconnection paperwork.

The interconnection team at SCE would like to remind everyone to update files to the most recent version of the NEM Interconnection Agreement for solar and wind projects (Form 16-344) from www.sce.com/nem. SCE will not accept older versions of the Agreement after Dec. 15, 2011.

SCE thanks its many solar customers for their patience as the interconnection team worked to keep up with the increased volume. In addition, a special thanks to those who modified their operations to submit initial paperwork much earlier in the process.

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New Solar Production Data Set Available from California Solar Statistics

To increase market transparency, the CSI program is now making available recorded monthly production data for CSI participants that are paid on a performance-based incentive (PBI) basis. This information can be downloaded from the California Solar Statistics website. The file containing the production data is called the Measured Production Data Set and found at the bottom of the page.

As is the case with the Working Data Set, the Measured Production Data Set maintains customer confidentiality by withholding the name and the address of the host customer. All data found on the [California Solar Statistics](#) site is exported from the CSI incentive application database and made available to the general public. The data is exported each Wednesday evening, and represents the most current and complete CSI data available.

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Housing Authority of San Bernardino Celebrates MASH Solar System

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB), the largest provider of affordable housing in that county, recently dedicated one of the largest Multifamily Affordable Solar Housing (MASH) Track 2 projects in Southern California Edison (SCE) territory.

[HACSB](#) celebrated its 70th anniversary with the solar dedication and a resident energy efficiency training held at Maplewood Homes, a 296-unit housing community that is home to more than 1,100 residents.

The average family at Maplewood spends \$572 annually on electricity; communitywide, the average cost savings from the solar power-generated electricity will be about \$166 per unit per year, or about 30%. "This is a great example of how solar can directly benefit low-income customers," said Aileen Lagbao, SCE's MASH program manager.



Southern California Edison awarded its first and largest MASH Track 2 Grant (\$1.84 million) to the Housing Authority of San Bernardino for Maplewood Homes solar project by HelioPower.

Garnering a \$1.8 million grant, the 260.5-kilowatt solar PV system will provide 85% of its production directly to tenants with the remaining 15% being channeled through common area savings to help fund onsite employment. The innovative project incorporates solar retrofits atop 100 of the community's rooftops, green job training and creation, as well as ongoing solar production monitoring and green outreach.

HACSB worked with [HelioPower](#) in the development of the grant proposal, engineering and construction of the solar power system and development and delivery of the educational, training and Internet components of the program.

"The MASH Track 2 award has provided employment for our residents and local businesses," said Susan Benner, HACSB's president and CEO. "Families at

the site have also been learning about conservation measures including the benefits of solar power and conserving energy."

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GRID Alternatives Solarthons Make Impacts Statewide

In November, GRID Alternatives concluded its most successful Solarthon season, installing a record number of solar PV systems for low-income homeowners during five community events across California.

Solarthons are large community block parties, bringing together hundreds of volunteers, job training participants and low-income homeowners to install multiple solar energy systems in a single day. This year, GRID Alternatives volunteers installed rooftop solar for 47 families, adding over 120 kilowatts of solar capacity in five days.

Each PV system will provide roughly 75% of the families' electricity needs. During the 30-year life of the systems, this represents approximately \$1.1 million in energy savings and facilitates a reduction of more than 3,800 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.



More than 600 volunteers, many of them job trainees, participated in the events. Organizations such as Troops2Energy in San Diego, Los Angeles' Venice Community Housing Corporation and the Center for Employment Training (CET) in the Central Coast sent groups of students to develop their hands-on solar installation skills.

The Single-family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) Program rebates, paired with the fundraising efforts of businesses and individuals, make it possible for [GRID Alternatives](#) to provide low-income families greater access solar energy.



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Solar Water Heating Training in San Diego



The California Center for Sustainable Energy ([CCSE](#)) is partnering with [National Solar Trainers](#) to provide an affordable solar water heating training program in January to fully prepare attendees to enter into this growing market. Participants will learn the skills needed to launch a solar water heating career as an installer, designer, marketing professional or entrepreneur.

The workshop will cover all aspects of solar water heating from fundamentals and business practices to comprehensive, hands-on solar water heating installation laboratory. Participants can choose to

attend a two-day workshop to enhance their knowledge and business skills or attend a four-day workshop that includes the installation lab. These courses can cost up to \$2,000 at some training facilities, but CCSE is offering the course at a reduced price.

[Two-day workshop](#) (Jan. 16 - 17) \$50, includes course workbook and lunches.

[Four-day workshop](#) (Jan. 16 - 19) \$100, includes the installation lab, course workbook and lunches.

Whether you are new to the workforce, unemployed or changing careers, this workshop will give you the basic skills and information needed to advance your career in the solar water heating industry.

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City of Chula Vista Celebrates New Solar Facilities

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on Nov. 15, 2011, the [City of Chula Vista](#) unveiled the final two solar electric systems completed as part of a citywide solar initiative.

Representatives from various partners attended, including Andrew McAllister, director of policy and strategy at the California Center for Sustainable Energy, who presented a CSI incentive for \$148,272 to Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox.

"Over the last year, approximately 1,900 solar photovoltaic panels have been installed at 11 municipal facilities on rooftops and carports," said Mayor Cox. "The new solar arrays, which produce an equivalent amount of energy to powering 125 homes annually, represent a seven-fold increase in the City of Chula Vista's renewable energy capacity and help to reduce its carbon footprint."



Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox receives a \$148,272 CSI check from CCSE's Andrew McAllister.

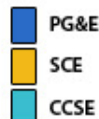
In January 2010, the City of Chula Vista entered into a contract with local San Diego solar integrator [Southern Contracting](#) to install solar electric systems at various city buildings for over 400 kW of clean solar energy.

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Upcoming Workshops and Trainings by Program Territory



Workshops by Program Territory



Free Statewide Workshops by the California Solar Initiative
CSI Program Administrators sponsor free, ongoing workshops for solar customers and installers on a variety of topics.

Workshops in SDG&E Service Territory by the California Center for Sustainable Energy

- [Passing the CSI Inspection Protocol](#): Jan. 10
- [Solar for Homeowners 2 – Be a Smart Solar Customer](#): Jan. 12

Workshops in PG&E Service Territory

- For workshops, [click here](#).

Workshops in SCE Service Territory

- For workshops, [click here](#).

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Call for Photos and Stories of CSI-Funded Solar Systems

Calling all installers and solar system owners! This is a great opportunity to showcase your CSI-funded solar projects. The California Solar Initiative Program seeks photos and success stories of CSI-funded solar systems for use in future newsletters or other CSI-related publicity. Photos can include completed solar PV systems, shots of installations in progress or solar water heating installations.



Please provide the following when submitting your solar PV system, solar water heating system or installation photos and stories.

- Name of photographer
- Name of installer, seller and/or system owner
- System size and location
- Date project was installed
- Full permission to use photo in CSI-related publicity

Submit your CSI-funded solar system photos and stories [here](#).

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