Community Solar in Seattle
• Serves 350,000 residential customers
• A “carbon neutral” electric utility
• Solar America City since 2008
• Received Special Project Grant for Community Solar in 2010
What is Community Solar?

A single solar energy system that provides energy and/or financial benefit to multiple community members

Increases **access** to solar energy
Community Solar Benefits

- Optimal siting
- Increased economies of scale
- Increased participation opportunities
- Community pride

- plus all the “regular” benefits of solar!
Utility Sponsored Model

Benefits
- Value of Energy
- Production Incentives
- RECs?

Voluntary Purchases

Utility Community Solar Installation

Benefits

Utility Handles
- Financing
- Maintenance
- Insurance
- Billing
- Taxes
Utility Program Examples

Ellensburg

Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Florida Keys Electric Co-op

Seattle City Light – 2011
Why City Light is launching a program

• Ongoing commitment to renewable energy and customer choice

• Awarded Solar America Cities Special Project grant for Community Solar!

• WA State Production Incentive program- expanded to include Community Solar!
WA Production Incentive: SB 6658

- Utility Tax Credit passed to participating customers – individual or community solar

- Three types of Community Solar
  1. Group-owned on local government site
  2. Utility-owned
  3. Company-owned on local government site

- Community solar production incentives are double those for individual solar

- Production Incentives end in 2020

A participant of a CS project that uses WA-made modules and inverters could earn $1.08/kWh!
Drivers of Program Design

- Open to all SCL customers
- Revolving fund
- State Production Incentive Program
- ARRA grant
- Securities laws
- Interconnection/Metering
- Billing IT
- Site opportunities
- Customer demand
First City Light Project

- 30 to 60 kilowatts
- Hope to use Washington made parts
- 300 to 500 participants
- Open to customer enrollment in 2011

Installation, operations, and maintenance handled by Seattle City Light!
Site Selection Criteria

- Host partner (public space)
- Solar access
- Structural integrity & feasible interconnection
- Community visibility
- Security
- Ease of installation
- Readiness

Welcoming to Everyone!
Customer Experience: Enrollment

• Purchase a portion of the community solar array’s energy output
• Sign up with Customer Agreement
• Minimum purchase: $600 (1 portion)
• Aiming for: 1 portion is \(~ 50\text{-}100 \text{kWh/year}\) (depends on installed cost per Watt)
Customer Experience: Participation

- Receive annual bill credit =
  Total CS Generation x Pro Rata Share x
  (Production Incentive + Value of energy)

  **SAMPLE:**
  \[30,000 \text{kWh} \times \frac{1}{500} \times (\$1.08 + \$0.07) = \$69/\text{yr}\]

- Aiming for return within 10 years
- Enrollment fees create revolving fund for future project construction

*Monetary benefits on customer’s electric bill*
The Fine Print

- Only City Light customers are eligible
- Transferable within City Light territory
- Assign to another account if you move out of City Light territory
- City Light cannot guarantee state production incentive program
- Customer agreement ends June 2020
Project Timeline

- Site Selection: Fall 2010
- Installation: Winter - Spring 2011
- Enrollment: Spring - Summer 2011
- Enrollments Fund a Second Project
- Future Installations: 2011 – 2013…