

# Renewable Energy Markets 2011

## Case Studies in Community Power



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# Community Solar Overview

- Community Solar serves market that is unsuitable or unwilling to host onsite/rooftop solar
- Larger offsite system feeds electricity into the grid
- Utility ratepayers purchase “subscriptions” from a subscriber organization
- “Subscribers” receive utility bill credit for their share of power produced by system
  - Subscriptions are portable and transferable
- Hybrid solar model
  - Construction and generation is utility scale DG
  - Power purchasers are retail
- Community Solar projects benefit from economies of scale and optimal location



# Rooftop Doesn't Always Work

- NREL study concluded that only 22-27% of US residential rooftop area is suitable for solar
- In CA, all utility customers pay for CSI, but few benefit
  - Most urban residents rent and/or live in multi-family buildings
  - Most businesses lease or rent
  - Requires owning property with correct roof orientation or sufficient space for ground mount
  - May cause property owners to cut down or not plant trees
  - Low/moderate income or of poor credit do not qualify
  - Zero portability



# Community Solar Status

- Many states including CA, NV, AZ, WA, CO, IL, VT, RI, MA, MD and ME are exploring Community Solar
- Colorado Community Solar Gardens Act
  - Project size from 10kW to 2MW
  - Must have at least 10 subscribers
  - Up to 6MW of Community Solar installations per year from 2011-2013
  - Qualifying utilities purchase power and RECs
- California
  - Proposed legislation: SB 843 (Wolk)



# CA SB 843 Basics

- Customers buy subscriptions to aggregated solar projects
- Arrays built at scale, production credited to subscriber accounts (generation only)
- Portability – customers can transfer subscriptions within their utility district
- No State subsidies required
- Ownership of RECs – TBD
- Projects managed by a subscriber organization



# Thank you!

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