



For Immediate Release

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The Community Environmental Council Brings Solar Group Purchasing Discounts to Southern Santa Barbara County through “Solarize Santa Barbara”

Starts August 7 and is available through November 9

Santa Barbara, CA, August 7, 2012 – In a press conference today, the Community Environmental Council (CEC) is announcing the launch of “Solarize Santa Barbara” – a three-month program designed to bring solar electricity to homeowners by offering a group purchasing discount. “For anyone in southern Santa Barbara County who has ever thought about going solar, now is the time,” said Megan Birney, CEC’s Energy Programs Manager, noting that 49 homeowners took advantage of a similar short-term discount program when CEC offered it in 2011.

“With Solarize Santa Barbara, we help guide homeowners through the entire process as an unbiased expert resource – making it as easy as possible for everyone to go solar,” said Birney. “This program offers many benefits: homeowners get lower electricity bills and support local businesses in the process. CEC helps to move a few more people away from dependence on fossil fuels.”

Santa Barbara County Second District Supervisor Janet Wolf participated in the 2011 Solarize Santa Barbara program and is hosting the kick-off press conference for the 2012 program. “Our solar system has been in place for one year and during that time we have seen our electricity bill decrease significantly. Aside from the financial benefit, we know that we are helping to reduce our carbon footprint while providing much needed jobs for our community.”

Homeowners Chris and Stacey Ulep also went solar through last year’s Solarize Santa Barbara program. “When we recently remodeled our 1931 home, we decided to take advantage of a lease option. We now pay a flat rate of \$65 per month, which is locked in for 20 years. We like not having to worry about electricity rates, and feel like we’re doing the right thing environmentally.”

Solarize Santa Barbara will be available for three months: August 7, 2012 through November 9, 2012. During this time, South Santa Barbara County residents can purchase solar electricity at a set price from two local installers: REC Solar and California Solar Electric. After a rigorous application process, CEC selected the two companies based on their experience, quality and price.

“Some homeowners find the process of getting multiple bids from solar installers to be time-consuming and confusing,” said Birney. “This program eliminates much of that hassle and legwork by locking in a set price for all participants and offering an objective third party assessment.”

New to this year’s program is that homeowners can switch to solar through a solar lease with Solarize Santa Barbara. “Leases are great options for homeowners who do not have the ability to pay the upfront costs of rooftop panels,” Birney said. “Anyone paying over \$100 a month for electricity should look at a solar lease as a way to lower their bills immediately.”

With CEC acting as a liaison between the installers and local residents, Solarize Santa Barbara aims to:

- Reduce the costs of solar as community group-purchasing programs offer better discounts than individual purchases
- Simplify the contractor selection process
- Ensure quality
- Increase the amount of renewable energy in southern Santa Barbara County.

In order to participate, Solarize Santa Barbara participants must:

- Live within the service territory (Southern Santa Barbara County which includes the cities of Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Goleta and the Gaviota area).
- Own a home that is suitable for solar installation.
- Sign a contract with one of the CEC's pre-qualified installers between August 7, 2012 and November 9, 2012.

To apply for "Solarize Santa Barbara", homeowners can go to www.SolarizeSB.org for the simple, 5-minute application process. Within 48 hours of application, CEC will contact applicants to discuss the process and expectations. Homeowners can also get more information on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/solarizesb>

CEC will host introductory workshops where residents can learn about energy efficiency, conservation, and solar energy. "Solarize Santa Barbara" participants are strongly encouraged to attend one of the following sessions:

- Tuesday, Aug. 21, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Goleta Community Center, 5679 Hollister Avenue,
- Monday, Sept. 17, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Carpinteria Woman's Club, 1059 Vallecito Road, Carpinteria
- Tuesday, Oct. 23, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara

In addition to getting a discounted price for solar power, Solarize Santa Barbara participants will be helping to support CEC's mission. Included in the purchase price is a small one-time fee (\$0.15 per installed watt) that is based on the size of the solar installation and will be paid by REC Solar and California Solar Electric directly to CEC. This fee will help CEC continue to promote renewable energy in the Central Coast region and be self-sustaining, with no additional cost to the homeowner.

About the Community Environmental Council

Since 1970, the Community Environmental Council (CEC) has led the Santa Barbara region – and at times California and the nation – in creative solutions to some of the toughest environmental problems. Today CEC is focused on moving the Central Coast region away from dependence on fossil fuels in one generation. Find CEC on the web at www.cecsb.org on Twitter @CECSB and on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CECSB>.

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