

For Immediate Release

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**Community Solar Helps Beacon Residents, Business Owners
'Declare Energy Independence'**

***Beacon is Chosen as Dutchess County "Hub"
to Receive Time-Limited Solar Installation Discounts***

(Beacon, NY)— To celebrate Independence Day and promote new financial incentives for New Yorkers looking to go solar, Beacon is launching a unique state-supported solar education and group purchasing program, Solarize Hudson Valley. Through Solarize, residents and small business owners in Beacon and surrounding communities will be able to learn their options for solar electricity, evaluate opportunities for leasing or purchasing systems, and find out how to move forward with affordable solar power.

The Solarize campaign officially begins July 1, the same day as Central Hudson's just-announced rate hike of nearly 5% over the next three years. According to program coordinator Jeffrey Domanski, "There is a great opportunity here thanks to the convergence of economic squeeze and incentive – the rate hike combined with the federal tax credit and state incentives still available for solar power. Beacon is an innovative community and we are ready to run with this."

Solarize Beacon + welcomes the public on July 11 with a launch celebration and community workshop at Polhill Park, located at the intersection of Main Street and Route 9D next to the Visitor Center. In-depth workshops will follow throughout the summer and fall, led by a team of over 30 skilled volunteers. That team includes City Council member Peggy Ross, who recently installed solar panels on her Victorian house and barn to contain energy costs. Says Ross, "For me it was a pretty strong political stance about people having their power. In fact, the Patti Smith song about 'Power to the People' was going through my head as I thought about how to get our electric bills under control."

The time-limited group purchasing discounts, up to 15 percent and more, are available through November 15, 2015. The program benefits customers and installers alike, by reducing the "soft costs" of marketing and bringing communities together with pre-qualified installation firms and high quality educational programming.

Solarize campaigns have more than doubled the use of residential solar in hundreds of New England towns. They are taking off in New York with support from Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's NY-SUN and Community Solar initiatives, and in Dutchess County as a priority of County Executive Marcus Molinaro who says:

“We are proud to be among six counties in the Hudson Valley selected by NYSERDA to participate in the Solarize Hudson Valley campaign. The Solarize model has found success throughout the United States, and we are excited to bring this model to Dutchess County. Solarize Hudson Valley will provide residents with direct access to information and resources regarding solar energy options for their home, making it easier and more affordable.”

In 2013, New York had the fourth highest average electricity prices in the United States. Most new solar homeowners approach energy independence within a few months and see significant long-term savings on their utility bills.

Led by Sustainable Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountainkeeper, the initiative is part of Mountainkeeper’s statewide RenewableNY initiative. The three-year effort is funded in the Hudson Valley and Southern Tier by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). A spring pilot in Kingston is being followed by the roll-out of education and outreach events in the “hub” communities of Woodstock-Rosendale, Warwick-Goshen, and Beacon. Residents of surrounding communities are welcome at Solarize outreach events which combine education, sociability and the opportunity to ask questions of the selected installer representatives.

New York's aggressive efforts to expand its clean energy economy are producing impressive results. The state now ranks third in the nation in new solar capacity during the first quarter of 2015. New York trailed only California and Nevada in Q1, according to the recently released U.S. Solar Market Insight Report compiled by GTM Research and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

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Solarize Hudson Valley is a partner in RenewableNY's effort to help New York State transition to a clean energy future. RenewableNY is a partnership including Sustainable Hudson Valley, Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Catskill Mountainkeeper, and is supported by NYSERDA under Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative. NY-Sun will invest up to \$1 billion in solar power through 2023 to expand solar installations statewide and help New York’s solar industry become self-sustaining. Visit www.Solarize-HudsonValley.org and www.RenewableNY.org to learn more.