



solar electric power association

PRESS STATEMENT

Immediate Release:
August 18, 2009

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SEPA Commends Southern California Edison Solar Projects

First Solar and Southern California Edison commit to build two large-scale solar power plants

The Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) commends the announcement today that Southern California Edison and First Solar have agreed to build two large-scale solar power projects in southern California. The agreement marks a key milestone in achieving SEPA's prediction that electric utilities will quickly become the largest and most important customer for the solar industry. According to Southern California Edison (SCE) and First Solar, the two installations will have a generation capacity of 550 megawatts of photovoltaic solar electricity, enough to provide power to approximately 170,000 homes.

"In the past year, we have seen a large and vital shift in solar power development," said Julia Hamm, executive director of SEPA. "Especially given the tough financial conditions, we continue to see that not only have utilities become essential partners for the solar power industry, but they are taking leadership positions more every day. The solar industry is rising to the challenge and showing excellent growth."

Today's announcement illustrates one of the key drivers of the current solar industry: utility-driven projects. While many of the largest solar power projects announced in the last year have used solar-thermal technology, the new SCE projects will use thin-film solar photovoltaic panels that convert sunlight directly to electricity. "Innovation from a variety of solar companies is rapidly reducing the cost of solar power, and announcements like this are indicators of the solar industry's scale-up to meet utility-scale needs. Research shows that we are reaching the point at which solar power is as or more cost-effective than traditional sources of power in certain U.S. locations," continued Hamm.

According to nationwide data collected by SEPA and reported in its 2008 [Top Ten Utility Solar Integration Rankings Report](#), Southern California Edison already has a total of 441 megawatts of solar power integrated in its service area, more than any other utility in the country. The company also installed or interconnected more than 32 megawatts of new solar capacity in 2008, ranking second in the nation for new solar integration.

"California utilities have been leading the way on utility-driven solar power for years, and Southern California Edison is doing its part both with this announcement and the 500 MW of distributed PV that was recently approved by the California Public Utilities Commission," said Kim Kiener, SEPA's western regional director. "Today's announcement demonstrates how California utilities are working diligently to meet renewable energy goals with solar power and commanding national leadership in the process."

The agreement between First Solar and Southern California Edison covers the 250-megawatt "Desert Sunlight" project near Desert Center, and the 300-megawatt "Stateline" project in northeastern San Bernardino County. According to Southern California Edison, the plan will be submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission for approval, and both projects are scheduled to be completed in 2015.

The state of California aims to generate 20 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2010. The state is considering legislation to add a goal of 33 percent by 2020.

To arrange interviews with or comments from Julia Hamm, SEPA executive director, or Kim Kiener, SEPA western regional director, contact Emily Chamberlin Douglas at 650-762-2945 or emily.douglas@ar-edelman.com.

Additional Resources:

[2008 Top Ten Utility Solar Integration Rankings](#)
[Utility Procurement Study: Solar Electricity in the Utility Market](#)

About the Solar Electric Power Association: SEPA is comprised of over 500 utilities and solar industry members. From national events to one-on-one counseling, SEPA is the go-to resource for unbiased and actionable solar intelligence. Breaking down information overload into business reality, SEPA takes the time and risk out of implementing solar business plans and helps turn new technologies into new opportunities. www.solarelectricpower.org

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