

Subject: Gov. Rell: New Solar Program Will Help Residents Cut Electricity Expenses

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## **Governor Rell Announces New Program to Help Make Renewable Energy More Affordable**

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced a program to help low- and moderate-income residents cut their electricity expenses and build on the state's commitment to renewable energy.

The Connecticut Solar Lease Program, the first of its kind in the nation, is a new initiative designed to eliminate the high initial costs associated with the purchase and installation of residential solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. Through the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), a combination of rebates and tax credits can be used to lower the cost of leasing solar systems, helping more residents obtain clean, renewable solar energy.

“Connecticut is a national leader in promoting clean energy in a way that makes sense, and this exciting, innovative program proves that once again,” Governor Rell said. “With the national economy in a slump, with energy prices at frankly ridiculous highs and other prices – including food prices – headed for the sky, our families are looking for alternatives. The Clean Energy Fund is making solar energy a real possibility for many more Connecticut households by combining the success of its solar rebate program with the unique characteristics of this solar leasing program.

“By creating more opportunities for renewable energy sources, we can assist individuals, reduce energy costs, improve air quality and reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil,” the Governor said. “Programs such as this are a key component of my agenda to keep Connecticut a leader in sustainability.”

This is the first time a ratepayer-funded organization such as CCEF has partnered with financial institutions to leverage federal tax credits in order to make renewable energy more affordable. CCEF is investing \$38.6 million and hopes to help approximately 1,000 homeowners in the next three years.

Residents with qualifying credit and whose household income is less than or equal to 150 percent of the median income in their area are eligible for the program. A Hartford family of four with a total household income of less than \$121,000, for example, would qualify for a complete solar photovoltaic system with no down payment required.

“This program is the latest initiative by CCEF to make clean, renewable energy accessible to Connecticut’s families,” said CCEF President Lise Dondy. “By combining CCEF’s solar rebate program with the financial power of leasing, we have created an affordable way for Connecticut homeowners to adopt solar energy without the high upfront cost.”

CT Solar Leasing, LLC, a non-bank subsidiary of U.S. Bancorp, will finance the purchase and installation of the systems. By owning these systems, CT Solar Leasing can take advantage of federal business tax incentives presently unavailable to consumers. With the CCEF’s Solar PV Rebate Program and the federal tax incentives there is no need for a down payment. CT Solar Leasing’s monthly payment for a typical 5-kilowatt system is approximately \$120 on a 15-year lease.

“CT Solar Lease will be an exciting addition to U.S. Bancorp’s growing portfolio of renewable energy investments,” said Matt Philpott, Vice President of Historic, New Markets and Renewable Energy Tax Credit Investments at U.S. Bancorp. “The significant equity generated by the federal investment tax credits and CCEF’s forwarding-thinking rebate program are the keys to achieving a cost effective way for homeowners to benefit from clean solar-powered electricity.”

AFC First Financial Corporation is a partner in the development of CT Solar Lease and will manage the application and approval processes for residents, as well as handle the lease payments.

“We are very excited to work with solar contractors and homeowners in implementing CT Solar Lease,” said Peter Krajsa, President of AFC. “Our experience in energy lending shows that consumers appreciate a simple financing option with low fixed monthly payments that can be offset by their energy savings. CT Solar Lease not only provides extremely low payments but eliminates the down-payment entirely – a real win-win for Connecticut homeowners.”

Gemstone Lease Management, LLC, is also a partner in the development of CT Solar Lease. Gemstone provided leadership in the structure and capitalization of the program, and will be responsible for the day-to-day management.

“This program is innovative in its use of commercial solar tax credits not currently available to Connecticut homeowners for the installation of solar electric generating systems,” said Gary Kleiman, President of Gemstone. “We are confident that CT Solar Lease will provide the most affordable and cost-effective solution for moderate to low income Connecticut homeowners.”

For more information about this program, visit [www.ctsolarlease.com](http://www.ctsolarlease.com).