CUTTING THE CORD: MOTIVATIONS REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN SHARED SOLAR PROGRAMS

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The Good News About Solar:

November 2013: 394 MW of new generating capacity, all of it based on renewable fuels.

Year-to-date additions: of the 12,641 MW of new capacity added from January through November of 2013, 4,388 MW or 35 percent is being generated by renewable sources, including 2,631 MW of new solar, surpassing oil, new coal and nuclear.

Maybe Not So Good New:

- wind resources now stand at 5.9 percent of total capacity (or 60.27 GW)
- solar generates less than one percent (0.6 or 7.11 GW) of the nation's electricity

So why are utilities and their financial partners so worried?

USB: Solar has turned from a heavily-subsidised marginal technology into a mainstream source of power generation.

Citi: The sector will continue to exhibit growth, this being driven by underlying economics rather than legislatively driven spending or mandates imposed by policymakers .

"Who would have believed 10 years ago that traditional wire line telephone customers could economically 'cut the cord?'"

-- Peter Kind for Edison Electric Institute, 2013

SHARED SOLAR
AS ONE WAY FORWARD

Survey of Potential Subscribers

RATIONALE

No matter how attractive the economics of a project might be and regardless of how successful policy entrepreneurs have been in delivering policy victories, absent the development and implementation of appropriate **marketing and recruitment strategies** shared solar will be little more than an interesting niche experiment.

Partners:

- CERTs
- MN Community Solar
- MN Interfaith Power and Light
- Fresh Energy
- Linden Hills Environment Committee

Method:

- Individuals contacted via partners mailing lists
- Request for participation sent by partners
- Except for MN IPL respondents completed survey via Survey Monkey

Table 1

N of Respondents by Partner

Partner	Total N of Responses	% of Total Responses
CERTs	148	37%
MN Community Solar 2	116	29
Fresh Energy	65	16
MN Community Solar 1	56	14
MN IPL	19	5

Table 2

Importance of 'Hassle Factors'

Aggregate Percentages

Factor	**Very Important**			**Not at all Important**
Complexity of contract	31%	29	24	13%
Uncertainty of changing existing infrastructure	22	28	27	20
Difficulty of maintaining system	23	26	26	21
Lack of knowledge about how system works	14	23	28	34
Dealing with installers	9	22	30	35

Table 3

Uncertainty about . . .

Aggregate Percentages

Factor	**Very Important**			**Not at all Important**
Suitability of property	48%	20%	15%	16%
Payback period	26	33	22	17
Environmental benefit	9	16	27	45

Table 4

MOTIVATIONS:
Individual Benefits of Shared Solar
Aggregate Percentages

Factor	**Very Important**			**Not at all Important**
Ability to achieve energy independence	59%	25%	10%	4%
Personal economic benefit	43	34	22	3
Ability to use leading-edge technology	25	34	25	14

Table 5

MOTIVATIONS:
'Local-ness' Benefits
Aggregate Percentages

Factor	Very Important		Not at all Important	
Environmental benefits	72%	19%	4%	3%
Energy to be used locally	48	29	18	4
Minnesota companies will build technology	43	34	17	3

Table 6

MOTIVATIONS:
'Socializing' Benefits
Aggregate Percentages

Factor	Very Important			Not at all Important
Opportunity to partner with neighbors	26%	36%	27%	9%
Opportunity to partner with members of affinity groups	15%	29	33	22

Table 7

Whom Do You Trust?

Aggregate Percentages

Factor	Very Trustworthy		Not at all Trustworthy	
Someone speaking for an affinity group	28%	52%	18%	2%
Neighbor with some experience in solar energy	23	43	29	3
Local installer or contractor	16	50	30	2
Spokesperson from a municipal or cooperative utility	15	47	28	7
Positive media coverage	9	37	38	11
Spokesperson from a local unit of government	9	45	36	7
Spokesperson from an investor owned utility	6%	31%	42%	19%

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Recruitment of additional Minnesota partners
- Recruitment of partners outside of Minnesota
- Analysis by individual cohort type, i.e., environmentalists, faith communities, business sector, etc.
- Analysis by demographic category, i.e., age, gender, etc.
- Analysis by geographic location

SOLAR GARDENS
COMMUNITY POWER