Media Contact:
Natasha Ferguson, Marketing Communications Specialist
951.465.2866 | nferguson@gridalternatives

First Low-Income Community Solar Project in California Underway

Nonprofit GRID Alternatives Inland Empire and Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians receive $2.05 million grant to bring solar and job training to tribal community

Anza, CA — July 8, 2020 — GRID Alternatives Inland Empire (GRID IE), an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, is a national leader in making clean renewable energy technology and job training accessible to communities who need it most. GRID IE was awarded a $2.05 million grant under the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) Low-income Weatherization Program, Community Solar Pilot Program and recently broke ground on its largest community-scale solar project to date.

The nearly 1-megawatt solar electric system on the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians reservation — **California's first low-income community solar project** — is currently underway. This project will provide $5.4 million in savings to benefit low-income members of Anza Electrical Cooperative (AEC). AEC will offer bill credits to qualified low-income residents, enabling low income co-op members to significantly reduce their energy bills. They will also maintain full ownership and responsibility of the solar array and its output. AEC is slated to do some electrical upgrades including installation of new power poles and transformers to support the influx of energy. According to the agreement with AEC, approximately 38 qualified low-income Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indian Tribal members and an additional 150-250 low-income AEC members within the boundaries of the cooperative will receive a credit offsetting their electric bills.

"We are excited to break ground on California's first low-income community solar project. The partnership between the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, Anza Electric Cooperative and GRID Alternatives will provide clean energy, job training and bill savings to tribal members and the surrounding community who are not currently able to benefit from existing low-income solar programs. This is what makes this pilot community solar program so special, and we hope our success will provide a model for more community solar across California," said GRID IE Executive Director Jaime Alonso.

The first phase of the project included site grading/clearing, erosion control, surveying, location staking, receiving of piles and some racking materials, and pile driving. The second week of this phase will include continuation of pile driving, trenching, AC/DC sub work, receiving more equipment and materials and a site walk through to assess the progress. According to Commercial Project Manager Vanessa Lorrah, the project is expected to be complete in fall of 2020.

GRID IE serves Riverside, San Bernardino and Inyo counties, providing disadvantaged communities throughout the Inland Empire with long-term relief from unpredictable utility costs, while training

—more—

individuals for positions in the solar industry. GRID's Tribal Program helps tribal communities become self-sustaining by providing resources to assist with their clean energy goals. Renewable energy can drive economic growth and environmental benefits in communities including tribal reservations that are most impacted by underemployment, pollution and climate change.

For more information about GRID Alternatives Inland Empire, visit www.gridalternatives.org/ie or call 951-272-GRID(4743).

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES INLAND EMPIRE

GRID Alternatives Inland Empire (GRID IE), an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, is a national leader in making clean, affordable solar power and solar jobs accessible to underserved communities everywhere. Using a unique, people-first model, GRID develops and implements solar projects that serve qualifying households and affordable housing providers, while providing hands-on job training. GRID Alternatives has regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the mid-Atlantic region, and tribal communities nationwide, and GRID's International program serves Nicaragua, Nepal and Mexico. Since its inception, GRID IE has installed solar for over 2,000 families and helped households and housing providers save $60 million in lifetime electricity costs, while training over 2,800 people. For more information, visit gridalternatives.org/ie or call 951-272-GRID (4743).

ABOUT ANZA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (AEC)

Anza Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AEC), energized in 1955, is a member of Touchstone Energy® - the national brand of electric cooperatives - providing power to the communities of Anza, Garner Valley, Pinyon Pines and parts of Aguanga. AEC's service area is nearly 700 square miles of high desert with an elevation at roughly 4,000 feet where winter weather can sometimes be a challenge. Anza is located at an almost equal distance from Palm Desert, Hemet and Temecula in Riverside County in Southern California.

ABOUT SANTA ROSA BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

The Santa Rosa Indian Reservation is located in Riverside County, between Palm Springs and Anza, and occupies 11,630 acres of land. Currently, there are 141 recognized Tribal Members (18 and over). Approximately 144 individuals live on the Reservation. The people of *Sew'ia* are one of eight Cahuilla Bands which include Cahuilla, Ramona, Los Coyotes, Torres-Martinez, Augustine, Cabazon, Agua Caliente, and Morongo.

ABOUT CSD & CALIFORNIA CLIMATE INVESTMENTS

The Department of Community Services and Development's (CSD's) Low-Income Weatherization Program Community Solar Pilot is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities. CSD partners with non-profit organizations and local governments dedicated to helping low-income individuals and families achieve and maintain economic security, meet their home energy needs, and reduce their utility costs through energy efficiency upgrades and access to clean renewable energy.