



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPA's McCarthy, HUD's Castro, White House Officials Spotlight Solar Power for Low-Income Families at Community Installation in Northeast Washington, D.C.

GRID Alternatives expands national low-income solar energy program to mid-Atlantic region, raises important policy issues on access to solar power and jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 18, 2014 - Today U.S. government agency and White House officials paid a personal visit to the home of Kiona Mack, a single mother in the economically challenged Ivy City neighborhood in Northeast Washington, D.C., joining volunteers, job trainees, and community partners to install solar panels on her home. The project was led by GRID Alternatives, the country's largest nonprofit solar installer, which is launching its new mid-Atlantic presence with this neighborhood project to install solar energy systems on 10 Habitat for Humanity of Washington D.C. homes.

GRID Alternatives' expansion into the D.C. area comes at a time of tremendous growth for the solar industry¹ and amid ongoing state and Federal policy discussions around how to make solar power more accessible to underserved communities.

"While we all must do our part as individuals to conserve energy and help preserve our environment, we can do more through partnership, especially when addressing needs in historically underserved communities," said HUD Secretary Julián Castro. "The job training that GRID offers represents a tremendous economic opportunity for low-income residents who want to learn about the solar business and work in a field where their skill is in high demand."

"Communities like Ivy City are critical to the success of our nation's clean energy transition," said Erica Mackie, GRID Alternatives co-founder and CEO. "Not only are they seeing the benefits of lower electricity bills and job opportunities, but they are also contributing to one of the most important causes of our time. If we're going to do this on a national level, **we need proactive policies that support access to clean, renewable and affordable energy for all of our communities.**"

Along with Castro and McCarthy, other administration officials on site to support the project were Dan Utech, Special Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change; Mike Boots, Acting Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality; and Minh Le, director of the Solar Energy Technologies Office within DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

"I'm very excited about going solar," homeowner Mack said. "The savings are going to help me get what I need for my kids, but it's also about taking advantage of the sun and creating energy."

A single mother of two children, ages 11 and 7, Mack has an Associate's degree in accounting and works in project management, but hopes to go back to school to complete her Bachelor's degree. Her 2.1 kilowatt system is expected to save her around \$30 per month in electricity costs.

“We’re thrilled to be working with GRID Alternatives to make our homes in Ivy City even greener,” said Susanne Slater, Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC’s President and CEO. “We’re committed to using solar energy and other technologies that reduce energy consumption and lower the cost of home ownership for the families we serve.”

GRID Alternatives’ 10-home project in Ivy City, which wraps up on September 23, is supported by a \$2 million expansion grant from Wells Fargo and major philanthropic donations from solar manufacturers SunEdison, SunPower and Enphase. SunEdison is also sponsoring an all-women’s installation as part of a broader effort to get more women involved in solar. Job trainees from Sasha Bruce Youthwork, a local youth services and workforce development organization, will also participate on the four-day project, getting hands-on experience installing solar.

¹ According to the SEIA-GTM Research 2nd Quarter 2014 *U.S. Solar Market Insight* report, forecasted 2014 growth of installed U.S. solar is expected to be 36 percent over 2013; the same report shows a total of 15.9 gigawatts of installed solar photovoltaic capacity, enough to power 3.2 million homes, according to SEIA.

About GRID Alternatives

GRID Alternatives is a nonprofit organization that makes renewable energy technology and job training accessible to low-income communities. We bring together community partners, volunteers and job trainees to implement solar power and energy efficiency for low-income families, providing energy cost savings, valuable hands-on experience, and a source of clean, local energy that benefits us all. More than 4,500 families have benefited from our work to date, saving \$113 million in lifetime electricity costs, and over 17,500 people have received solar training. GRID Alternatives has 10 regional offices and affiliates serving California, Colorado, the New York tri-state region, the mid-Atlantic region, and Tribal communities nationwide. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

About Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C.

Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C. believes that everyone deserves a house they want to call home. That's why we work to reduce poverty housing in the nation's capital by building affordable, energy- and resource-efficient homes for people in need. DC Habitat builds and rehabilitates homes in order to sell them at affordable terms to low-income, working families. Visit us at www.dchabitat.org for more information.

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