



***** MEDIA ADVISORY *****

GRID ALTERNATIVES SUPPORTS XCEL ENERGY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT TO EXPAND LOW-INCOME ACCESS TO SOLAR ENERGY

DENVER, CO – October 4, 2016: [GRID Alternatives Colorado](#), an affiliate of the nation’s largest nonprofit solar installer, today announced its support for a comprehensive utility settlement being considered by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) this week to address significant state energy policy issues and increase access to solar power for Colorado’s most underserved communities.

Under the proposed settlement terms, Xcel Energy would expand low-income customer access by dedicating a portion of its rooftop and community solar garden capacity and Solar*Rewards Program specifically for this underserved customer group. The settlement addresses an important equity issue, as low-income utility customers have historically contributed to distributed solar energy rebate pools through bill payments, yet have not been able to participate in and directly benefit from these investments.

“The settlement’s low-income solar provisions really demonstrate Xcel Energy and Colorado’s national leadership on energy access and equity issues,” said Chuck Watkins, Executive Director of [GRID Alternatives Colorado](#). “The new programs would reduce the energy cost burden of our most vulnerable ratepayers and generate co-benefits like job training opportunities in the fast-growing renewable energy sector.”

The settlement agreement is a result of lengthy negotiations and is supported by diverse stakeholders, including GRID Alternatives. It proposes making almost 20 megawatts of dedicated low-income rooftop and community solar capacity available for years 2017-19. If approved by the CPUC, this would be one of the most robust, well-designed low-income solar programs in the country. The low-income components include: consumer protections to maximize benefits, ensuring rebates and incentives directly reduce the electric bills of low-income subscribers; strengthening solar energy’s tie to existing energy efficiency programs; and expanding job training opportunities.

GRID Alternatives Colorado, which is a party to the settlement, is the leading installer of low-income rooftop and low-income community solar in Colorado. GRID is currently working with the Colorado Energy Office on a statewide initiative designed to demonstrate how [community solar](#) can be optimized to reduce energy costs for utilities’ highest need customers – those who spend 4 percent or more of their income on utility bills. Nationally, GRID Alternatives is a leading voice in equitable access to solar energy, and a partner on the White House’s Clean Energy Savings for All Americans initiative.

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ABOUT GRID ALTERNATIVES

GRID Alternatives is America’s largest nonprofit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities. GRID has installed over 7,500 solar electric systems with a combined installed capacity of 26 megawatts, saving families and housing providers nearly \$210 million in lifetime electricity costs, preventing over 580,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing more than 28,000 people with solar job training. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org