

# BRINGING THE BENEFITS OF DISTRIBUTED SOLAR ENERGY TO ALL HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITIES WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME RESIDENTS

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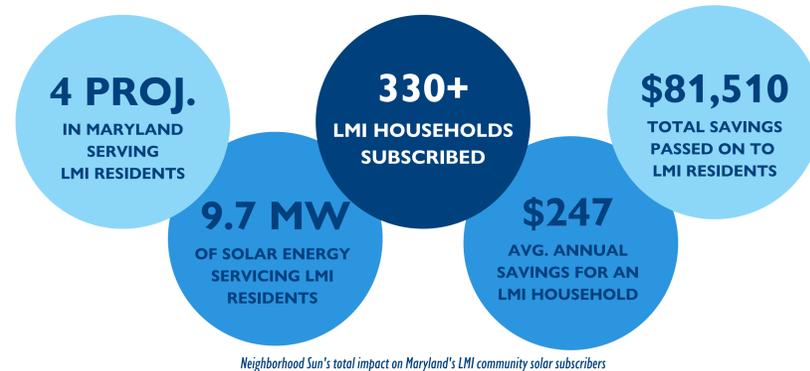
In the clean-energy space, it is critical that we have all community solar projects to have a minimum carve out for low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities. The energy transition will not happen without a large focus on socio-economic justice, and larger benefits for disadvantaged communities are a must. To deliver on that promise, we need to bring several stakeholders together: regulators to roll out effective program rules, state/federal agencies to provide economic incentives, solar companies willing to provide an ethical and just transition, and local communities to be involved. This session will provide insights on how this all came together for the Oaks Landfill Project in Laytonsville, Maryland.



## NEIGHBORHOOD SUN'S CURRENT IMPACT ON LMI COMMUNITIES

Community solar, by its very nature, is an opportunity for nearly all residents to utilize an affordable, clean energy source. This core aspect of community solar is a main driver for Neighborhood Sun and its mission, which is to ensure everyone has access to solar energy. Unfortunately, a majority of families and individuals across the county are not able to tap into these renewable energy sources. Furthermore, many of these households and their residents are classified as low- or moderate-income (LMI) and often make up a neighborhood or community. These LMI communities have continuously been overlooked, overburdened, and overtaken when it comes to environmental impacts and energy equity. But, at Neighborhood Sun, this is where we dedicate our efforts. We work with policymakers, local organizations and non-profits, and solar developers and installers who are taking their time and resources to support these communities in the energy and environmental sector.

In 2018, Neighborhood Sun began subscribing residents to the first community solar project, the Panorama Landfill, in our management and acquisition portfolio, servicing residents in the PEPCO-MD utility territory. Since this time, we have enrolled customers in four (4) community solar projects in our management and acquisition portfolio in Maryland that have between 30 and 51% of the electricity output for each community solar project dedicated to LMI residents.



## THE SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT OF THE LMI-FOCUSED "OAKS LANDFILL" COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT

Back in 2020, Ameresco Inc. was selected by Montgomery County, Maryland to develop, finance, construct, operate and maintain two Community Solar Energy Generation Systems (CSEGS) at the Oaks Landfill located at 6001 Olney-Laytonsville Road, Laytonsville, Maryland. The two projects will have a capacity of 2 MW-ac each and are qualified within the Community Solar Pilot Program of Maryland. 100% of each system's electricity output is to be allocated to Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) households (as defined in COMAR 20.62). The site itself is a closed and capped landfill owned by the County. The Oaks Landfill is approximately 545 acres with a capped footprint of 170 acres. The capped portion will be used for the ballasted solar project. The landfill received mixed municipal solid waste from 1982 until 1995, with over 7 million tons of waste deposited.

Ameresco, Inc. received two grants, totaling about \$950,000. These are one-time awards under the Maryland Energy Administration's Community Solar LMI-PPA Grant Program, payable when the arrays produce power creditable for subscribers. This helps owners and operators of these facilities to provide a higher discount to income-eligible subscribers. Below is the overall project timeline as of May 2022.



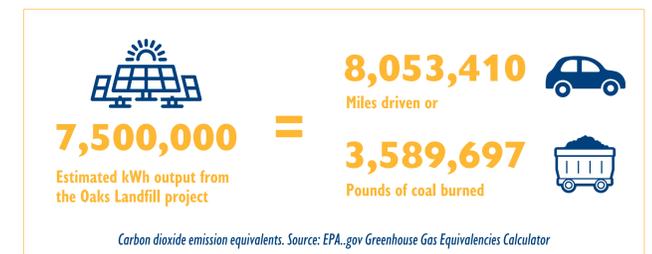
Ameresco Inc., Montgomery County, and Neighborhood Sun represented at the Oaks Landfill community solar project announcement event

## HOW THE "OAKS LANDFILL" SOLAR PROJECT SUPPORTS LMI COMMUNITIES

The Maryland Community Solar Pilot Program, administered by the Maryland Public Service Commission, has awarded well over 200 MW-ac of solar capacity to dozens of projects across the state, with many having a dedicated carve out for LMI subscribers. The Oaks Landfill community solar project is a groundbreaking project for Montgomery County and Maryland as a whole. This is the largest community solar project in the whole country (as of May 2022), to reserve 100% of its power for LMI residents who receive their electricity via PEPCO-MD.



In addition to the economic benefits provided to LMI residents, it is key to understand the environmental impacts on the local communities. The more solar energy produced by community solar projects in the PEPCO-MD area, the less pollution will occur across the Mid-Atlantic region.



Aerial image of the Oaks Landfill prior to construction of the solar project



Panorama Landfill - an example of a completed community solar project on a previous landfill



Panoramic image of the Oaks Landfill prior to construction of the solar project

Both commercial and residential accounts that are LMI under the Maryland regulations can subscribe to this project.

**Commercial** = Affordable housing complexes

**Residential** = Households with supporting documentation

In conclusion, Neighborhood Sun, and specifically the Oaks Landfill project, can support LMI communities financially, environmentally, and socially through community solar. The next steps are to ensure all stakeholders who are involved in launching community solar programs and projects across the country specifically carve out subscription options for LMI residents. In the fight against climate change and environmental injustice, we should all be a united front with nobody left behind!