

# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PRC hears update on New Mexico's community solar program, including key milestones toward implementation**

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) this week heard an update on the state's community solar program from InClime Inc., the independent administrator overseeing the development of the project, which calls for the creation of community solar facilities to provide qualifying electric utility customers access to the renewable energy produced by the facilities. The company shared its vision and plan for the program as well as a schedule for key project milestones moving toward implementation.

In its role as community solar program administrator, InClime will conduct the request-for-proposal process for project solicitation, evaluate proposals, and recommend bid finalists to the Commission; facilitate the participation of low-income customers; ensure that solar power developers comply with all rules and procedures; manage utility contracting and relations with solar power developers; and administer dispute resolution processes, if needed.

InClime emphasized the importance of advocating for customers and ensuring that strong consumer protections are part of the community solar program. InClime managed the 2019 launch of Illinois' 200-megawatt community solar program and its 250-megawatt 2021 community solar reopening. InClime attributes a large part of the success of the Illinois program to the consumer protection services that it implemented and its software platform that facilitated the enrollment of over 27,000 community solar

subscribers. The company also resolved more than 300 consumer complaints, issuing 35 warning letters and referring 30 complaints to the state's attorney general's office.

"Transparency, accountability, and collaboration are what we want to focus on bringing to this program," said Miana Campbell, the Community Solar Lead for InClima.

"Community solar, by nature, is a complicated product with many participants and stakeholders with varying and vast levels of familiarity with projects and policies. We want to put ourselves in a consumer advocacy role and ensure that not only is capacity utilized but utilized in an ethical way."

Having created a schedule of key milestones for New Mexico's community solar program, InClima will initially focus on consumer protection strategies and work with individual counties and coalitions to ensure they are meeting appropriate project objectives. Last month, the company released a low-income provider outreach RFP to work with local organizations that can provide immediate feedback on educational resources that are needed. Other key milestones include:

- Organize a county workshop (November 2022)
- Release project RFP and announce pre-bid conference (November 3, 2022)
- Program website launch (November 2022)
- Hold pre-bid conference (November 17, 2022)
- Publish program guidebook (November 2022)
- Open RFP solicitation (December 1, 2022)
- PRC discussion of interim report (January 4, 2023)
- Close RFP solicitation (January 31, 2023)
- Publish marketing guidebook (March 2023)
- Announce project awards (March 31, 2023)

"I want to make sure the public understands that we are moving forward with this program and is aware of these key milestones coming up," said Commission Vice Chair Joseph M. Maestas.

Last year, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed into law the Community Solar Act, which called on the PRC to draft and approve the rules of the program. The PRC's community solar rule includes a statewide capacity of 200 megawatts of community solar power as well as selection policies for utility companies issuing opportunities for community solar development in New Mexico, requiring that at least 30% of each project serve low-income subscribers and service organizations. Consumer protections are also established for community solar subscribers.

InClime currently administers multiple renewable energy management programs as well as several grant, loan, and low-income programs that cover renewable energy and energy efficiency across the United States and Canada.

InClime's presentation to the PRC can be watched online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeGYD0HDk8>

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