



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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Sept. 30 Deadline for Grow Solar Chicagoland Program that Promotes Affordable Solar Group Buy Program A Good Deal as Solar Energy Incentives Increase

CHICAGO—At a time of soaring energy prices and utility rate hikes, an Illinois consumer watchdog alerted consumers of a Sept. 30 deadline to inquire about a special solar energy program that can help reduce their electricity bills. With the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) in Illinois last year and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in Washington this year, the benefits of going solar are unprecedented, the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) said Thursday.

The Grow Solar Chicagoland (www.Chicagoland.GrowSolar.org) group buy program is helping property owners take the first steps toward lower electricity bills. The final day to get involved in the program by requesting a site assessment to see if your home is right for solar panels is Friday, Sept. 30.

“Now is a perfect time to consider going solar,” said Marina Minic, Solar Programs Administrator at CUB, which partners with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) in the program. “Adding solar panels can lower your energy bills right away, and unlike utility companies, those panels will never raise their rates.”

In addition to cheaper energy, this year’s participants will see the benefits of the group-buy model, in which the rebate for a new solar system gets larger as more participants join and benchmarks are passed. This year’s Chicagoland program has surpassed its first benchmark and is well on its way toward the second, as Windfree Solar, the program’s selected installer, works with interested participants. This means participants will get a larger rebate in addition to the already-discounted price on solar panels.

The recent passage of the IRA, federal clean energy legislation, makes solar an even better deal. “This new legislation has many great provisions to help homeowners lower their energy costs,” said Marta Monti, Grow Solar Program Manager at the MREA. “The federal tax credit for new solar arrays has been extended and raised to 30 percent. By combining that tax credit with our group buy rebates and Illinois’ Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs), property owners can save up to 70 percent on the cost of a new solar system.”

Because going solar is a big investment and can be complicated, Grow Solar Chicagoland focuses on educating potential participants through free “Solar Power Hours,” which provide details on installation, incentives and financing options. The program has hosted 48 of these informational sessions over the past three months, educating over 700 participants about their solar options. Solar Power Hours are finished for the year, but interested property owners can still watch a presentation at the program’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/growsolarchicagoland and get more information at www.Chicagoland.GrowSolar.org.

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*The MREA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first Energy Fair (www.TheEnergyFair.org) in 1990. The MREA’s mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715 - 592 - 6595 or visit www.midwestrenew.org. **Additional Resource:** [Grow Solar Chicagoland 2022 Media Kit](#)*

CUB is Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, it has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping block rate hikes, secure refunds and fight for clean, low-cost energy. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, 1-800-669-5556, or visit its website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

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