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**Governor Rendell Says PA's Solar Capacity Doubles under
Sunshine Solar Rebate Program**

Program Helps Add 5 MW of Capacity, Meets First Goal

Harrisburg – Governor Edward G. Rendell said today that the new PA Sunshine Solar Program is performing better than expected and has helped to double the state's solar generating capacity in less than 6 months.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection, the program has reached its first incentive milestone for small business rebates—the deployment of 5 megawatts of solar power, or enough to supply electricity to about 575 average homes in the state.

The Governor said achieving the goal is good news for those small businesses interested in lowering their electricity costs through clean, renewable energy, and also for Pennsylvania's environment and economy.

“When we enacted the PA Sunshine program, we said it was going to help reduce electricity bills for consumers, make solar energy more affordable, create economic opportunities, and help produce more renewable energy that will help

improve our environment,” said Governor Rendell. “Reaching this milestone, not to mention the overwhelming response we’ve had to the program, is proof that it’s performing as intended.

“PA Sunshine is putting people to work across the state doing everything from manufacturing solar technologies to installing and maintaining them, while helping people and businesses become less dependent on the electrical grid and other fossil fuels, which saves them money. And because of the program, we’re also emerging as a national leader in developing and deploying solar technology. With the projects this program is making possible and others in the works, it is likely that we will be among the top five states for total solar capacity within the next year,” he added.

Since the program opened on May 18, the commonwealth has committed \$12.5 million in 625 projects by residential and small business consumers. The projects represent at least \$50 million in private investment, according to DEP.

More than 300 installers have been certified to install solar systems under the program and DEP continues to receive and accept applications.

The solar electricity capacity created by the small business program, 5 megawatts, is enough to offset 5,580 tons of carbon dioxide, 16,000 pounds of nitrogen oxide, and 77,500 pounds of sulfur oxide.

A running tally of completed projects is kept on the rebate program’s Web site so perspective applicants and solar developers are able to track the program’s progress.

“Among the small business community in particular, we are seeing a very high response rate to the program, so much so that in less than six months, we’ve more than doubled the solar capacity in Pennsylvania,” said DEP Secretary John Hanger. “As the market continues to develop, the intense competition among

solar installers and greater efficiencies on the part of manufacturers will help bring down prices for solar. As such, the need for the incentive will continue to decline.”

The \$100 million PA Sunshine Solar program reimburses homeowners and small business owners up to 35 percent of the purchase and installation costs of solar energy technology. In combination with federal tax credits, consumers could reduce system costs by 45 percent. It is part of the \$650 million Alternative Energy Investment Fund Governor Rendell signed into law in July 2008.

Under the original guidelines of the program, reaching the 5 megawatt threshold means the incentive rates for small business solar projects will be reduced. Originally, the program offered \$2.25 per watt for 3-10 kilowatt (kW) projects, \$2 per watt for 10-100 kW projects, and \$1.75 per watt for 100-200 kW projects.

As of Saturday, Oct. 31, all small business incentive rates were reduced by 50 cents across the board. Homeowner incentive rates will remain at the original level of \$2.25 per watt.

For more information, call the Office of Energy and Technology Deployment at 717-783-8411 or visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Pa Sunshine.