

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact:**

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**Community Environmental Council Announces New Program Allowing Nonprofits to Go Solar at No Cost**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA, April 12, 2018** – Community Environmental Council (CEC) is proud to announce the launch of Solarize Nonprofit, a new pilot program to help local nonprofits go solar at no cost.

To make the program possible, CEC is partnering with financing partner Asteri Solar. Selected nonprofits will enter Power Purchase Agreements with Asteri, buying the power that is produced on their own roofs at rates projected to be equal to Southern California Edison. After about 5 years, they will own the solar array, which will then provide free power for decades. CEC has also vetted local commercial solar companies that will install projects through the program.

“The nonprofits who participate will be able to save significantly on their power bills over time,”explained April Price, CEC’s Renewable Energy Specialist. “The savings on utility costs can then flow back to support the organizations’ core programs.”

Andrea Bardakos-Riley, co-founder of Asteri, shared that this impact investing model is a way for their company to support the community by reducing long-term operating costs for nonprofits. “We’re excited to help nonprofits finance solar projects, and then transfer solar ownership to the nonprofit as soon as possible."

Asteri worked with CEC to test out this model of financing with a 7.5 kilowatt solar installation on the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition’s headquarters, BiciCentro. Executive Director Ed France shared his gratitude to Asteri, noting that the organization has already seen savings on electricity bills.

In addition to the project financing, Solarize Nonprofit provides solar information and coaching to nonprofits. “We want to make sure that local nonprofits receive the solar equipment, design and sizing that is appropriate for their specific site. We are happy to talk with boards, staff and other stakeholders to make sure that the projects move forward smoothly,” stated Price.

The pilot program can accommodate up to eight nonprofit building projects, though if more nonprofits and investors are interested, the program could grow to add significant amounts of new solar to our region. “The results are trackable and quantifiable, which makes this program one that will likely expand over time as the community’s interest grows,” Price added.

While Solarize Nonprofit has already identified several potential pilot program nonprofits, they are currently looking for more. Eligible nonprofits must own their buildings or be in long term leases and have facilities suitable for solar. Qualified investors who have passive income, such as from real estate or energy holdings, are also being sought.

For inquiries and more information, contact CEC Renewable Energy Specialist April Price at aprice@cecmail.org or phone 805-963-0583 x 101.

**About CEC**

Since 1970, CEC has led the Santa Barbara region – and at times California and the nation – in creative solutions to some of the toughest environmental problems. CEC pioneers real life solutions in areas with the most impact on climate change. Our programs – including the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival – provide pathways to clean vehicles, solar energy, resilient food systems, and reduction of single-use plastic. Our commitment to excellence has made CEC one of only three nonprofits in Santa Barbara County to earn the highest possible ratings from both Guidestar and Charity Navigator. Find CEC on the web at www.CECSB.org and on Facebook.com/CECSB, Instagram.com/CEC\_SB and Twitter.com/CECSB.

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