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# New York City's Largest Commercial Solar Power System Unveiled

## *Result of Innovative NYSERDA, Con Edison, Clean Air Communities, Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center and PowerLight Partnership*

**Brooklyn, NY (Oct. 7, 2002)** – Clean Air Communities, New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), Con Edison, Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC) and PowerLight Corporation joined with U.S. Congresswomen Nydia Velazquez and other dignitaries today to unveil New York City's largest commercial rooftop solar power system. The $900,000 project was jointly funded through a public-private partnership by Clean Air Communities, NYSERDA and GMDC. The system was built and installed by PowerLight Corporation of Berkeley, California, using state-of-the-art solar technology and zinc bromide batteries. The photovoltaic panels and advanced battery will collectively work as a solar energy system to generate and store electricity in coordination with Con Edison's network system.

The 115-kilowatt solar power system covers 11,500 square feet of roof area and reduces the peak electricity demand on New York's power grid while simultaneously improving local air quality. When fully powered, the solar system will generate the equivalent energy to light 100 homes. The system will avoid thousands of tons of harmful emissions that contribute to fine particle pollution, smog, global warming, acid rain and haze. Fine airborne particles and "soot" cause thousands of premature deaths and asthma attacks in New York each year. To the extent the system displaces fossil fuel electricity, it will eliminate 1,456 tons of carbon dioxide emissions over its 25-year lifetime – a reduction equivalent to planting 16 acres of trees.

"This is an important event for our community," said Congresswoman Nydia M. Velazquez, who represents Greenpoint. "Solar power reduces emissions from fossil fuel-burning power plants where children's asthma and other respiratory ailments are high. It introduces innovative technology for environmental justice by reducing the number of power plants in our community. And, it demonstrates renewable energy sources to move us away from dependence on foreign fuel sources. I am very excited about the future that I see here!"

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The solar panel array, which is located on the roof of two GMDC buildings in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn, transforms sunlight directly into electricity, generating clean electrical power. The total solar system includes a 59 kW array at GMDC's Humboldt Street location and a 56 kW array that will be operational at GMDC's Manhattan Avenue building within the next several months. "This project demonstrates that preserving urban manufacturing can be compatible with community revitalization and environmental responsibility," said David Sweeny, GMDC's CEO. "We're particularly excited that we can do this in Greenpoint, which has historically been home to some of the City's worst environmental problems." GMDC is a non-profit organization that rehabilitates industrial buildings and focuses on creating and maintaining high-quality, blue-collar jobs for low-income New Yorkers.

Funding for the project is provided through a joint partnership of NYSERDA, GMDC and a Clean Air Communities grant stemming from Con Edison. "Governor George Pataki's mandate to NYSERDA is clear: Improve New York's energy efficiency, while protecting our environment and solidifying our State's economic base," said William M. Flynn, NYSERDA President. "This project addresses all three of those goals, and NYSERDA has contributed $300,000 to see it become a reality."

GMDC's building at 810 Humboldt Street will also have an innovative load shifting capability so that excess energy generated on weekends will be stored and used to offset energy needs during peak demand. This example of generating electricity in connection and cooperation with the grid is a model for clean power generation for the future. Kevin Burke, President and COO of Con Edison, stated, "This innovative solar power system demonstrates how renewable energy and electricity from the grid can work hand-in-hand to provide reliable, safe and efficient energy to all of New York's neighborhoods. We have donated funding to Clean Air Communities to make these types of energy and clean air investments in our communities."

Clean Air Communities, a program initiated by the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and the Northeast States for Clean Air Foundation (NESCAF), is designed to bring state-of-the-art clean air and energy efficiency technologies to disenfranchised urban communities. Managed by a Steering Committee currently including New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), NESCAF and Con Edison, Clean Air Communities provides grants, technical assistance and outreach support in partnership with community-based environmental organizations. Ken Colburn, Executive Director of NESCAUM/NESCAF and President of Clean Air Communities stated, "Working with GMDC, NYSERDA, Con Edison and PowerLight to make large-scale commercial solar power in the Greenpoint community a reality exemplifies Clean Air Communities' mission as well as its success."

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"Distributed solar power systems are critical to reducing our nation's dependence on fossil fuels," said PowerLight's Vice President, Tom Leyden. "In today's economy, cost-effective, clean, reliable power is becoming a priority for business, government agencies and non-profit organizations. Generating power on-site not only saves money, it also contributes to greater reliability, security, and energy independence."

PowerLight's PowerGuard® solar electric roof tile system was selected as the solar electric technology application for GMDC's unused flat roof space. PowerGuard is a patented, lightweight photovoltaic roofing assembly that delivers clean solar electricity to the building while protecting the roof from damaging effects of weather and UV radiation. Additionally, the solar tiles provide thermal insulation benefits to the building.

Ashok Gupta, NRDC's Director of Air and Energy programs stated, "The value of New York's sunshine has been clearly underestimated. This project demonstrates that solar technology is ready now and can provide important environmental, economic and reliability benefits to New York City. The City and State need to do more to remove regulatory barriers that keep projects like this one from contributing to a sustainable energy future for New York."

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For more information, please visit:
www.cleanaircommunities.org
www.powerlight.com
www.gmdconline.org
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