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OAQDA, Ohio EPA Announce New Residential Solar Energy Program for Underserved Ohio Communities

COLUMBUS – [The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority \(OAQDA\)](#) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) announced today that they will partner to administer a \$156 million program to expand the use of renewable solar energy in traditionally underserved Ohio communities.

As part of the new program, the agencies will provide grants and low-cost financing for residential and community solar energy projects in disadvantaged areas of Ohio, ultimately lowering electricity bills in low- to moderate-income households. The new program will focus on maximizing the number of underserved households with solar energy generation, delivering cost savings for families, and improving air quality through decreased greenhouse gas emissions. The initiative also will contribute to Ohio's thriving economy by creating the workforce needed to deploy these solar energy systems across the state.

“We look forward to dispersing these funds in ways that will dramatically impact the lives of people in low-income and disadvantaged communities,” said OAQDA Executive Director Christina O’Keeffe. “These funds are designed to alleviate some of the financial burdens of our Ohio families while spurring economic growth and creating healthier air for all Ohioans.”

Today's announcement, which coincides with Earth Day, builds on the work already underway by both Ohio EPA and OAQDA. For more than 50 years, OAQDA has worked to harmonize a strong economy and a healthy environment in Ohio. It is a non-regulatory, independent state agency that supports projects that will have a positive impact on Ohio by improving air quality, which offers significant public health savings and economic benefits, while helping projects meet compliance standards.

“We are thrilled to support projects that will have direct and immediate impacts on the state’s economy, environment and public health. These funds are closing the gap in access to solar energy,” said Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel.

Ohio's program is funded through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's federal Solar for All program, which announced funding for 60 solar energy programs this morning. Ohio's project was selected through a competitive process.

The distribution of Ohio's \$156 million award will start later this year. More information is available at Ohioairquality.org.

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The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) is a non-regulatory government agency working to position Ohio as a leader in harmonizing a strong economy and a healthy environment. Since its creation in 1970, OAQDA has worked to improve air quality by supporting businesses, creating jobs and improving communities while enhancing the health and safety of all Ohioans. To date, OAQDA has awarded more than \$6 billion to finance air quality projects. For more information about OAQDA and its services, please visit ohioairquality.org.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1972 to consolidate efforts to protect and improve air quality, water quality and waste management in Ohio. Since then, air pollutants dropped by as much as 90 percent; large rivers meeting standards improved from 21 percent to 89 percent; and hundreds of polluting, open dumps were replaced with engineered landfills and an increased emphasis on waste reduction and recycling.