

Executive Summary Fruit Belt Neighborhood Solar Partnership

National Grid received approval from the New York Public Service Commission for a demonstration project to introduce new solar power opportunities for residents of the Fruit Belt Neighborhood that borders the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus on August 4, 2015. The Neighborhood Solar Demonstration project will include the installation of solar energy systems on rooftops of 100 homes to introduce renewable energy in the neighborhood, and to determine whether concentrated neighborhood solar projects can produce grid efficiency, make economic sense in low- to moderate- income neighborhoods, and if they can be replicated elsewhere. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC) is partnering with National Grid on the project that is part of the New York State's broader energy initiative called Reforming the Energy Vision (REV).

Solar equipment will only be installed on homes that both meet established criteria and have homeowner interest in participating. The power generated from the systems will be captured in front of the meter and sold back to the electricity market with the proceeds from the electricity sales then used to reduce the electricity bills of the participating residents. Savings to residents from the program are estimated to be approximately 20 to 25 percent of their monthly electricity bill. As currently envisioned, there will be no costs to participating homeowners.

The Fruit Belt was chosen given its proximity to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, a long-standing partner of National Grid on a number of other projects; its mix of underserved urban residents that typically have low adoption rates of renewable energy options; and to test a concentrated amount of solar systems in an urban geographic area.

The goals of the demonstration project are to accelerate the adoption of renewable energy options in an innovative way; ensure scalability elsewhere throughout New York State; to test the effectiveness of utility ownership of distributed generation in engaging low- to moderate-income communities and to provide benefits to the Fruit Belt Neighborhood for their participation.