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INNOVATIVE LOW-INCOME ACCESSIBLE PROGRAM BRINGS SOLAR TO 6 BOSTON-AREA HOMES

August 13, 2021 - BOSTON, MA - Dorchester-based B-Corp Resonant Energy has completed construction on the third phase of its Solar Access Program (SAP), a unique program designed to bring clean energy to communities traditionally underserved by the solar industry. An innovative project three years in the making, SAP III allows any building -- regardless of the owners' income or credit score -- to host solar panels at no cost in exchange for clean power and energy savings. The program installed rooftop solar arrays on 6 Boston-area homes and is expected to save the homeowners over \$60,000 over the 25-year lifetime of the systems. The SAP III projects received financing from Cambridge-based impact investment firm, Sunwealth, and were installed by Hingham-based contractor, Devlin Inc.

Due to the high up-front costs associated with installing a solar array, a number of neighborhoods in Boston that are characterized as having lower median incomes have been historically underserved by the solar industry. This has denied households in communities such as Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury, important savings from reduced energy costs. In 2015, more than 20% of households nationwide reported foregoing food or other necessities to pay an electric bill.¹ In Massachusetts, the average household spends 3% of its income on electricity, but that number jumps to 7% among low-income families and 21% for those living below the poverty line.²

Unlike other no-cost solar-leasing programs, SAP is one of the first nationwide that doesn't require a credit minimum or create the burden of an additional bill, allowing for more on-site solar across the board. The economics work by assigning 20% of the power generated by the system to the homeowner's electric bill and selling the remaining 80% to a creditworthy, mission-aligned anchor institution. Participating homeowners will see a 20-40% reduction in electricity costs and the rest of the energy will be sold to Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, a community organization dedicated to fostering economic opportunity and affordable housing within the neighborhood.

¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=37072>

² Talk Poverty, <https://talkpoverty.org/2021/02/25/solar-power-low-income-programs/>

“It was a wonderful day, all my neighbors stopped by to comment on them. A lady around the corner got hers recently too.” said Elnora Thompson, a SAP III homeowner, “I think it’s a wonderful thing, getting to see them glinting in the sun everytime I drive down the street.”

“Money is a major barrier.” said David Queeley, Eco-Innovation District Director at Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation which helped sign up participants for the program. “A lot of people can understand the return on investment and how long it will take; having the cash up front is sometimes very difficult and the notion of taking out a loan can be really scary for people. If we can sweeten the pot and help people out a little, it’s money well spent for us.”

The first two phases, SAP I and SAP II, were completed in 2017-2018 and helped to identify some of the systemic challenges often associated with installing solar projects outside of affluent neighborhoods. Many of the SAP sites needed upgrades including new roofs, structural reinforcements, or electrical work before they were able to host solar. For SAP III, these upgrades were covered by grants provided by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance and Robert Treat Paine Association. Expensive structural improvements remain a barrier for the widespread rollout of no-cost solar projects in low-resource neighborhoods.

“A lot of the homes in Boston are not brand new condominiums, they’re family homes and the families need support to handle the roadblocks put up by utility companies.” said Karen Payne, chair of the Ward-19 Democratic Committee and another participant in SAP III, “If there were more groups like Resonant, a lot more people would have solar.”

Resonant Energy is currently seeking funding for future SAP projects. The company invites you to join us and the community to celebrate the completion of the SAP III projects on August 17 from 5:30 - 7 pm at Nightingale Community Garden in Dorchester. Families, press and community members are welcome! [RSVP here](#)



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About Resonant Energy

Resonant Energy is a community-based solar provider that believes that everyone has a right to clean affordable solar. We help under-invested communities take their place at the forefront of the global transition to clean energy. Through partnerships with local nonprofits, we deliver high quality solar arrays for houses of worship, affordable housing providers, and homeowners – regardless of income. We currently serve communities in Massachusetts, New York City, and Long Island. www.resonant.energy.

About Sunwealth

Sunwealth is an innovative, tech-driven clean energy investment firm. By leveraging our deep understanding of solar with our extensive investment experience, we have developed a well-rounded portfolio of commercial solar projects that boast significant financial returns and provide high-efficiency solar power to businesses, municipalities, and non-profit organizations. www.sunwealth.com.

About Devlin Inc.

Devlin Contracting & Maintenance is a family-owned business with a mission to bring solar to New England. Devlin Contracting & Maintenance is owned by two master electricians with over 56 years in the solar/ electric industry. www.devlininc.com.