



**Solar Together**  
**Strategic Planning Meeting Notes**  
November 17, 2016 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

**Purpose:** Develop a strategic action plan that include education, advocacy, and organizing campaigns and workforce development component for training solar workforce

**Meeting Goals:**

Provide an overview of planning initiative  
Map opportunities, resources, network, and targets  
Identify broad goals

**In Attendance:**

Jennifer Crosslin, Steps Coalition  
Joan Garner, Solar Advocate, La  
Ruth Story, EEECHO  
John Johnson, EEECHO  
Cassandra Johnson, MDEQ  
Gordon Jackson, NAACP  
Buck Lawrence, Steps Coalition  
Ya-Sin Shabazz, Hijra House  
Pat Black, Sierra Club  
Franz Znidar, Sierra Club

**Overview of Process and Goals of Meeting:**

See meeting schedule

**A Just Transition to 100% Renewable Energy is Possible for Mississippi**

<http://thesolutionsproject.org/infographic/#ms>

**Defining Just Transition:**

Participants discussed the elements of a just transition away from fossil fuels to renewables- solar, wind, and water. They are as follows:

- Retraining oil/gas industry workers to work in renewable energy industry. Many of the skills sets are transferrable.

- Providing renewable industry job and entrepreneurship opportunities and investments to low-income and minority communities that bear the brunt of costs and impact associated with the extraction, production, burning, and waste of the fossil fuel industry
- Growth of worker-owned energy cooperatives and increased engagement of member owners of current utility cooperatives
- Energy independence (rooftop and community solar) that is accessible and affordable for all (includes access to financing)
- Mississippi produces its own energy (i.e. not importing wind from Texas)
- Incentives for renewable and rooftop/community solar need to be equitable and available for low to moderate income earners
- Industry needs to pay a living wage
- Local municipalities and state government need a plan to transition their energy use and reduce carbon footprint

### **Mapping Activity**

Participants mapped the opportunities, challenges, and assets to expand solar in Mississippi. They are as follows:

### **Opportunities**

- **Federal Tax Incentive**- 30% tax credit for expenses related to home solar and other renewable energy system  
<http://energy.gov/savings/residential-renewable-energy-tax-credit>
- **Net Metering Rule**- Net metering incentivizes homeowners, businesses and leasers to install rooftop solar and send their excess solar-generated electricity back to the electric grid. In other words, customers like you and me will not only save on our own electric bill but can also become energy suppliers and receive credit for the clean power we create.

Mississippi Public Service Commission

<https://www.psc.state.ms.us/executive/rules.html>

Net Metering

[http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE\\_CONN ECT&queue=CTS\\_ARCHIVEQ&docid=362179](http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE_CONN ECT&queue=CTS_ARCHIVEQ&docid=362179)

MS Power Notice of Intent Net Metering Rates

<http://www.mississippipower.com/pdf/Order-Net-Metering.pdf>

Entergy Community Solar

[http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE\\_CONN\\_ECT&queue=CTS\\_ARCHIVEQ&docid=372842](http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE_CONN_ECT&queue=CTS_ARCHIVEQ&docid=372842)

- **Clean Power Plan**- EPA rule that requires states to submit a plan to reduce carbon emissions for utility plants by 30% by 2030. The rule is currently being argued in Supreme Court.

<https://www.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan>

- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Loan Program for Rural Cooperatives**  
With the EECLP, eligible utilities, including existing Rural Utilities Service borrowers can borrow money tied to Treasury rates of interest and re-lend the money to develop new and diverse energy service products within their service territories. For instance, borrowers could set up on-bill financing programs whereby customers in their service territories implement energy efficiency measures behind the meter and repay the loan to the distribution utility through their electric bills.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-efficiency-and-conservation-loan-program>

Roanoke Electric Cooperative as a model for the program

<http://www.roanokeelectric.com/usda-eeclp>

- **Clean Energy Incentive**- Incentive offered by the EPA that provides matching funds to states that create financial incentives for renewable energy projects and low-income community projects.

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/fs-ceip-proposal-061616.pdf>

Community Solar

[http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/community\\_development/community\\_solar\\_faq.html](http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/community_development/community_solar_faq.html)

- **White House Clean Energy Savings for All**  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/19/fact-sheet-obama-administration-announces-clean-energy-savings-all>

- **Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**  
<http://energy.gov/eere/solarpoweringamerica/solar-powering-america>

Solar Powering America is an interagency initiative between the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support greater solar deployment.

- **Foundations supporting solar projects**

- **Train the trainer certification programs** to train workforce for solar industry  
**NABCEP**

<http://www.nabcep.org/certified-installer-locator?country=United+States&state=MS&cert=>

### **Solar Energy International**

<http://www.solarenergy.org/sei-solar-professionals-certificate-program/>

- **SBA Loans**  
<https://www.sba.gov/managing-business/running-business/energy-efficiency/sustainable-business-practices/green-power-and-renewable-energy>
- **Energy Cooperatives-** As a member of a cooperative, residents can get a say in decisions and share in the profits.

Singing River Electric Member By-laws

[http://singingriver.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/SRE\\_Bylaws-2010.pdf](http://singingriver.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/SRE_Bylaws-2010.pdf)

## **Challenges**

- We need state incentives (rebates and subsidies) for rooftop solar. Rooftop solar is too expensive and tax credits are not useful for low to moderate-income earners.  
<http://www.seia.org/policy/finance-tax>
- MS Power does not allow for community solar.  
MS Power Notice of Intent Net Metering Rates  
<http://www.mississippipower.com/pdf/Order-Net-Metering.pdf>  
  
Entergy Community Solar  
[http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE\\_CONN\\_ECT&queue=CTS\\_ARCHIIVEQ&docid=372842](http://www.psc.state.ms.us/InsiteConnect/InSiteView.aspx?model=INSITE_CONN_ECT&queue=CTS_ARCHIIVEQ&docid=372842)
- Cooperative members are disenfranchised.
- We need investment capital to build community owned solar utility plants.
- Mississippi does not have a renewable energy portfolio standard or a solar carve-out.
- Mississippi does not have strong energy efficiency standards and building codes.  
<https://www.energycodes.gov/adoption/states/mississippi>
- We need a property tax exemption that allows for solar panel installations without increases your property taxes.
- We need to be able to communicate the economic, health, and community benefits of solar to decision makers.

- We need to know where our elected officials stand on this issue.
- We need to educate and mobilize the public around this issue.
- We need virtual net metering.  
<http://news.energysage.com/virtual-net-metering-what-is-it-how-does-it-work/>
- We need to understand the laws about utility scale energy ownership.
- We need a deeper analysis of net metering law.
- We need to eliminate the need for utility monopolies.

### **Assets**

- Infrastructure for workforce development programs that could provide training for solar job (community colleges and other workforce development agencies)
- Black/minority owned banks
- Community banks and credit union
- National/international models for transition (we don't have to re-invent the wheel)
- CTA Network- using solar energy
- Solar businesses in Mississippi (there are 15 solar companies)  
<http://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/mississippi>
- Labor Unions
- Youth organizations (Boys and Girls Club)
- Gulf of Mexico and other waterways (opportunities for small scale solar/wind projects on boats)

### **Next Steps**

This meeting provided the foundation for future planning meetings. Jennifer will provide the notes, meeting schedule, and invite participants to Basecamp where information and resources can be shared with each other throughout the planning process.