

The City of Seattle
Ordinance 127493
Council Bill 121261

An ordinance relating to the City Light Department; amending Sections 21.49.084 and 21.49.087 of the Seattle Municipal Code to update the Voluntary Green Power Programs and Community Solar Program.

Recitals:

Ordinance 121847 established Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 21.49.084 in 2005, authorizing the City Light Department (Department) to offer Voluntary Green Power Programs.

Ordinance 123479 established SMC 21.49.087 in 2010, authorizing the Department to offer a Community Solar Program.

SMC 21.49.130 authorizes the Department to promulgate rules, policies, and procedures from time to time, in accordance with SMC Chapter 3.02 as needed.

SMC 21.49.087 references incentive payments through June 2020, a date which has passed, and references an initial \$300,000 Department of Energy grant, which has been fully expended.

Customer interest in solar energy remains strong as evidenced by over 9,000 customers having interconnected solar electric systems within the City Light service territory since 2001.

The Department's Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Strategy, Strategic Plan, and Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) all prioritize increased access to clean, affordable electricity for all customers regardless of their financial circumstances or homeownership status.

Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) (chapter 19.405 RCW) requires the Department to provide a Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) for four-year periods. The 2026-2029 CEIP prioritizes the design and delivery of an accessible community solar program as a specific action to reduce household electric energy burden, and to ensure equitable transition.

Funding from Washington State's Community Solar Expansion Program (CSEP) is currently available to offset a significant portion of construction and development costs to offer community solar subscriptions that provide a financial benefit to income-qualified customers.

The Department continues to seek external funding sources to reduce utility and customer costs associated with designing and implementing a community solar program for all customers.

Community Solar Program projects are alternative energy resources that could benefit from use of City Light's Voluntary Green Power Program funds.

Department customers will be eligible to participate in community solar on a voluntary basis, subject to program rules, limited space, and availability.

The Department intends to implement the Community Solar program using methods to select program participants that are equitable for all customers and aligned with Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative. Therefore,

Be it ordained by The City of Seattle as follows:

Section 1. Section 21.49.084 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 126179, is amended as follows:

21.49.084 Voluntary Green Power Programs

* * *

B. The Department may offer to customers additional renewable energy programs that support non-qualified energy resources, provided that:

1. Customer participation in additional programs shall be voluntary and available to all customers. Customers may voluntarily begin or terminate their participation at any time by notifying the Department of their choice.

2. Additional programs shall encourage the adoption, availability, or affordability of renewable energy resources for the Department and its customers. Renewable energy projects supported by customer voluntary payments may include, but are not limited to:

a. The purchasing, funding, or partial funding of renewable energy projects.

b. Projects for deploying technologies to acquire renewable energy including projects located at local, low-income, non-profit, or public facilities.

c. Other activities intended to build awareness or to enable renewable energy projects through energy education, demonstrations, or collaborative efforts with community partners.

3. Additional programs will be entirely self-funded from voluntary program payments, including, but not limited to, costs of program projects, activities, administration, and marketing. Subject to ordinances authorizing issuance of the City's municipal light and power revenue obligations, the Department shall make available from its budgeted funds an amount equal to the voluntary program payments.

C. The Department may use funds generated from Voluntary Green Power Programs established under subsections 21.49.084.A or 21.49.084.B for funding of Community Solar Program projects established pursuant to Section 21.49.087.

Section 2. Section 21.49.087 of the Seattle Municipal Code, last amended by Ordinance 123675, is amended as follows:

21.49.087 Community Solar Program

A. ~~((The Community Solar Program allows customers to receive credits based on energy production from a solar photovoltaic (PV) array owned and managed by Seattle City Light.))~~ The Department is authorized to implement a Community Solar Program that enables eligible customers to participate collectively in community solar generation projects without the need to install a solar generation system on their premises.

B. The Community Solar Program may be offered on a voluntary basis ~~((beginning in 2011. All Seattle))~~ to City Light customers ~~((are eligible to participate,))~~ subject to ~~((limited space availability))~~ program rules, policies, procedures, and eligibility criteria adopted by the Department; program capacity, and availability of program funding, as determined by the Department. ~~((Interested customers will initiate their participation with a voluntary one-time upfront payment and signed participant contract.))~~

~~C. ((Each participating customer will receive an energy credit for each kWh produced by their portion of their assigned solar PV array, to be distributed annually as specified in a standard participant contract developed by the Department.))~~ The Department may develop and administer community solar projects and supporting infrastructure, including but not limited to energy storage systems and general electrical infrastructure, that allow customers to benefit from solar energy generation systems owned, managed, or otherwise arranged by the Department. Electricity produced by these projects will be delivered into the utility grid and the Department may provide a bill credit, discount, or other benefit structure to each participant, subject to program rules, and as specified in a participant agreement developed by the Department.

~~D. ((The credit for kWh produced by community solar PV arrays shall be equal to the Department's small general service energy charge for the City of Seattle (Schedule SMC) for all market-rate community solar participants, regardless of the rate schedule they fall under themselves.))~~ The Department may charge participation fees to recover program costs not covered by other Department, City, or external funding sources.

~~((E. Each participating customer will also receive annual renewable energy production incentive payments in accordance with RCW 82.16.110, as available through June 2020.~~

~~F. The first community solar array owned by the Department will initially be funded by a Department of Energy grant of \$300,000. The voluntary Community Solar Program payments (enrollment fees) will replace some or all of the grant funding and will be used to finance additional arrays in the same manner.~~

~~G.)~~ E. The Department has the right to terminate enrollment of new customers into the program at any time, but will meet obligations to ~~((participating))~~ existing customers enrolled in the program in accordance with participation agreement terms ~~((through the term of their contracts))~~.

~~((H.))~~ F. Terms and conditions of the program agreements will be developed by the Department and made available to ~~((program participants))~~ customers prior to their enrollment and may be updated by the Department over time.

This ordinance shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Sections
1.04.020 and 1.04.070.

Passed by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its
passage on August 11, 2026.



President _____ of the City Council

Approved _____ on August 13, 2026.



Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Attested on August 14, 2026.



Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

Seal