

GREEN TALES

Here Comes the Sun...In Seattle!

by Mark Plunkett

Contrary to popular perception, solar power is alive and well in the cloudy Pacific Northwest. In the fall of 2013, the Seattle Aquarium installed the largest solar array for an aquarium on the West Coast. With generous funding from Seattle City Light, the 49-kilowatt project covers nearly 4,000 square feet of the Aquarium's Pier 59 roof with 247 panels, measuring 4' x 4' each, purchased from Silicon Energy located north of Seattle, promoting green jobs in Western Washington. Most of the panels produce electricity for Seattle City Light customers who want sustainable power through the utility's "Community Solar" program.

"This partnership provides an iconic location to demonstrate how solar works in Seattle," said Seattle City Light General Manager and CEO Jorge Carrasco. Each 24-watt unit of the solar installation cost \$150. Participants receive credit on their Seattle City Light bills for their portion of the solar panels' output through 2020, along with all state production incentives. City Light estimates that participants will receive more than \$150 worth of electricity and production incentives for each unit purchased by the end of their agreements.

Complementing the solar project is a \$1.1 million investment by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation on eight energy upgrades in 2013–2014. These measures are expected to save the Aquarium over \$100,000 annually in utilities and help us reach our carbon footprint goal of a 25 percent CO₂ reduc-

tion compared to our mean 2008–2012 baseline. Actions include new heating systems, a new boiler, additional LED lighting installations, destratification fans, HVAC control systems and more.

The Aquarium strategic plan states we strive to be "... a catalyst for public engagement in the wonder, science and future vitality of the ocean and Puget Sound". The solar project provided a great opportunity for visitor and community engagement. We teamed with City Light on a "Conservation News" billing insert to encourage customer participation in community solar. As a result, all 1,850 available units sold out to almost 200 customers in six weeks, generating \$277,000 to be used for another project in the future. An interactive flat screen display with real time performance of the solar array and suggestions linking sustainability to the health of marine ecosystems is in development as well. These efforts complement existing sustainability messaging within our popular SCUBA diver shows, in our café around sustainable seafood and even with water conservation tips on the restroom walls.

MARK PLUNKETT, SEATTLE AQUARIUM
CONSERVATION MANAGER

Help bring solar to the Seattle Aquarium

For as little as \$150, City Light customers who join between September 2013 and February 2014 will help build a nearly 50 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system on the aquarium roof.

To learn more, call (206) 684-3800 or visit our website at seattle.gov/communitysolar.

Benefits of the program:

- Get annual credits for energy production with 100 percent payback (or more) expected by 2020
- Be part of a movement to demonstrate that solar power works here in Seattle
- Support clean, renewable solar power supplied directly to the Seattle Aquarium's marine conservation education and research activities

To reserve your spot in the Seattle Aquarium Community Solar program, fill out the form on the other side.







Reserve your spot today.
Fill out the form below and a Community Solar representative will contact you with next steps.

Yes, I want to bring solar to the Seattle Aquarium!

NAME _____

PHONE _____

SEATTLE CITY LIGHT ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Return the form in your bill envelope or mail it back to us:
Community Solar, Seattle City Light, 701 5th Ave., MS 901-687
Seattle WA 98124