



MASSACHUSETTS  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY RESOURCES**

# Solar Canopy Working Group

Meeting #1: MA Solar Canopy Incentive Overview

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18 April 2025

Presented by

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# Working Group: Charge

Section 124 of Chapter 239 of the Acts of 2024 direct the group to:

*“...develop **recommendations for regulatory and legislative changes** that may be necessary to encourage the construction and operation of solar power generating canopies. The recommendations shall be designed to contribute to the state’s greenhouse gas emission limits and sublimits established pursuant to chapter 21N of the General Laws and **facilitate the development and deployment of solar canopies** in a cost-effective manner...”*



# Working Group: Solar Canopies

- Solar Tariff Generating Unit with the majority of the solar capacity installed on a raised structure elevated high enough to maintain the function of the area beneath the canopy
- ***Example projects:*** parking lots, walkways, canals, gazebos, carports, pergolas
- For the purposes of this group, solar canopies will ***not*** include agrivoltaics projects



# Solar Canopies in SMART

- DOER established the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program as a new solar incentive program in 2017, pursuant to Chapter 75 of the Acts of 2016.
- Provides incentive “adders” for various project types over 25kw, including canopy projects
- Canopy projects currently receive an additional **6¢/kWh**
- SMART Regulations currently define a Canopy Solar Tariff Generation Unit as:
  - *A Solar Tariff Generation Unit with 100% of the nameplate capacity of the solar photovoltaic modules used for generating power installed on top of a parking surface, pedestrian walkway, or canal in a manner that maintains the function of the area beneath the canopy.*
- The Regulations make specific exception for projects installed over certain roadways or highways or adjacent parcels owned or controlled by the MA Department of Transportation

# Solar Canopies in SMART

228

projects approved or  
qualified

105.3

megawatts approved or  
qualified

\$4.01

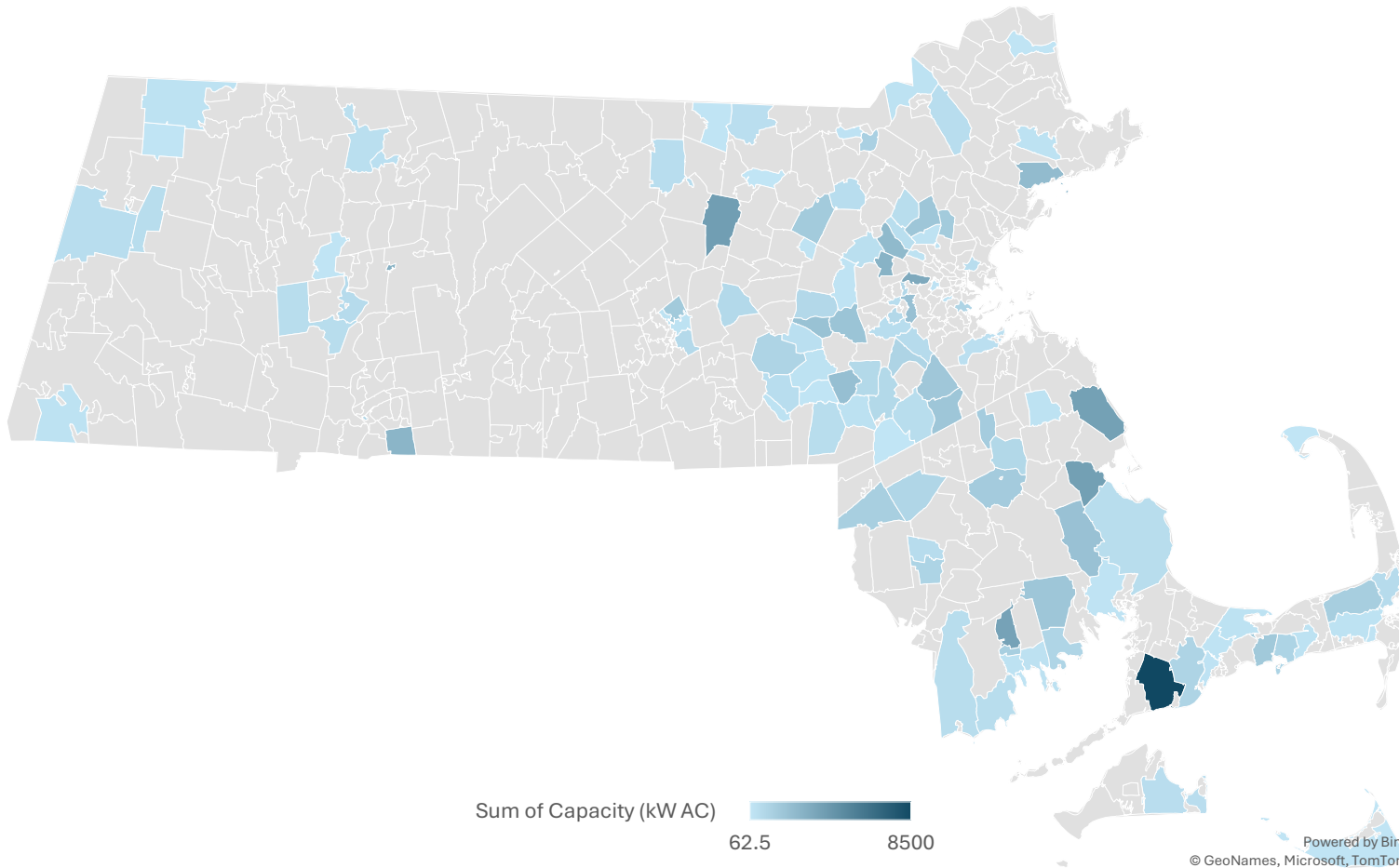
average self-reported  
installation cost per watt



*54% of projects are  
250 kw or smaller*

# Solar Canopies in SMART

Approved or Qualified Projects (by Capacity)



32%

Public Entity

34%

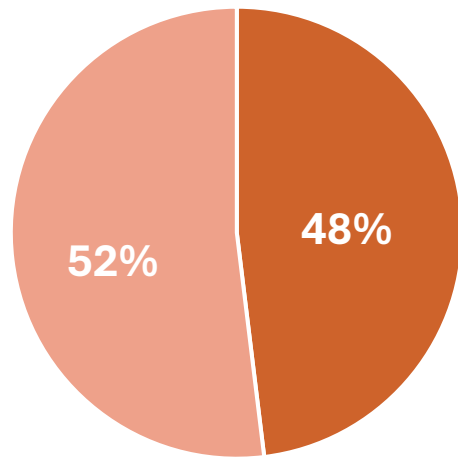
Community Shared Solar

1.5%

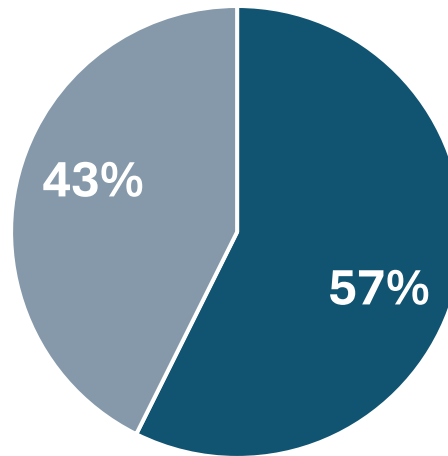
Low Income Property

# Solar Canopies in SMART

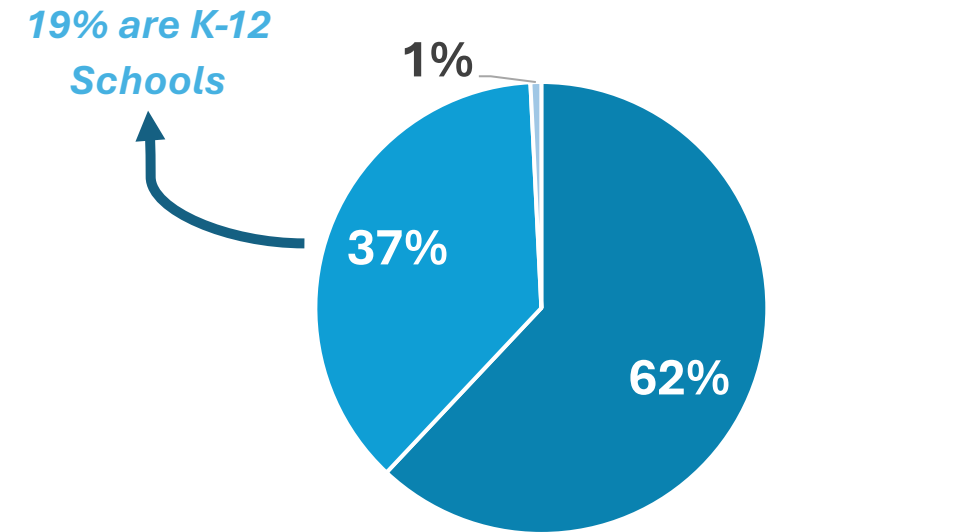
## Approved Projects (by Project Count)



■ Behind the Meter ■ Standalone Solar



■ 3rd Party Owned ■ Direct Ownership



■ Commercial ■ Government ■ Residential

# Solar Canopies in SMART 3.0

- In 2023, DOER initiated a review of its SMART Program and presented a Straw Proposal for program revisions (“SMART 3.0”) in Fall 2024.
- DOER intends to publish revised regulations Spring 2025 for a public comment period through Summer 2025 and a start date of January 2026.
- Straw Proposal sets adder values (and compensation rates) based on an annual economic assessment, to account for fluctuating market dynamics.
  - *Year 1 Proposal: increase Canopy Adder from 6¢/kWh to **8¢/kWh***
- Straw Proposal increases flexibility for canopy project eligibility by revising the definition accordingly:
  - *A Solar Tariff Generating Unit with ~~100% of the nameplate capacity of the solar photovoltaic modules used for generating power installed on top of a parking surface, pedestrian walkway, or canal in a manner that~~ **the majority of the solar capacity installed on a raised structure elevated high enough to** maintain the function of the area beneath the canopy.*
- Among other proposals, DOER is currently considering that “**not less than 75% of the nameplate capacity of the [modules allow] for the continued use of the area beneath for a secondary function including, but not limited to, parking, pedestrian walkway, transportation infrastructure, storage of equipment, or canal**”



# Additional Incentives

- Massachusetts also offers incentives through:
  - **Solar for All** - \$156 million federally-funded program to expand solar access in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities
  - **Low Income Services Solar Program** – specific grants available to low-income serving nonprofits
  - **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard** – non-SMART participants can sell Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) to energy suppliers
  - **Net Metering** – allows electric customers to offset energy use and transfer energy back in exchange for a bill credit
- The Federal Government offers further incentives and tax credits for solar generation projects, though none specific to canopy projects.

# Working Group: Revised Timeline

In accordance with the legislation, we propose the following draft timeline:

Date	Deliverable	Details
March 28	<b>Virtual kickoff: Overview</b>	
April 18	<b>Hybrid Meeting #1: Level-setting</b>	<i>review of MA policies/data, developer/agency presentations</i>
April 25	<b>Hybrid Meeting #2: Brainstorming</b>	<i>discussion of stakeholder ideas, other states</i>
May 9	<b>Hybrid Meeting #3: Outlining</b>	<i>report outline, proposed recommendations</i>
May 16	<b>Draft recommendations</b>	
May 19-30	<b>Group review and revision</b>	
May 30	<b>Hybrid Meeting #4: Finalizing</b>	<i>if needed</i>
June 2-13	<b>DOER/EEA review</b>	
June 16-27	<b>Governor review</b>	
June 27	<b>Hybrid Meeting #5: Wrap up</b>	<i>if needed</i>
June 30	<b>Submit report</b>	



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**Thank You!**