

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to increase participation in community solar and the receipt of associated benefits, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

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**A BILL**

To require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to increase participation in community solar and the receipt of associated benefits, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Community Solar Con-  
5 sumer Choice Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. COMMUNITY SOLAR.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) COMMUNITY SOLAR.—The term “commu-  
9 nity solar” means a solar power plant, through

1       which the benefits of the electricity produced is  
2       shared by 2 or more electricity customers.

3           (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
4       the Secretary of Energy.

5           (3) SUBSCRIBER.—The term “subscriber”  
6       means an electricity customer who receives direct  
7       economic benefits associated with the proportional  
8       output of the community solar facility of the cus-  
9       tomer.

10       (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY SOLAR CON-  
11       SUMER CHOICE PROGRAM.—

12           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
13       the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
14       shall establish a program to expand community solar  
15       options to—

16           (A) individuals, particularly individuals  
17           that do not have regular access to onsite solar,  
18           including low- and moderate-income individuals;

19           (B) businesses;

20           (C) nonprofit organizations; and

21           (D) States and local and tribal govern-  
22       ments.

23           (2) ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING FEDERAL PRO-  
24       GRAMS.—The Secretary shall align the program

1 under paragraph (1) with existing Federal programs  
2 that serve low-income communities.

3 (3) ASSISTANCE TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERN-  
4 MENTS.—In carrying out the program under para-  
5 graph (1), the Secretary shall—

6 (A) provide technical assistance to States  
7 and local and tribal governments for projects to  
8 increase community solar;

9 (B) assist States and local and tribal gov-  
10 ernments in the development of new and inno-  
11 vative financial and business models that lever-  
12 age competition in the marketplace in order to  
13 serve community solar subscribers; and

14 (C) use National Laboratories (as defined  
15 in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005  
16 (42 U.S.C. 15801)) to collect and disseminate  
17 data that assists private entities in the financ-  
18 ing of, subscription to, and operation of com-  
19 munity solar projects.

20 (c) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN COM-  
21 MUNITY SOLAR.—The Federal Government is encouraged  
22 to participate in community solar projects, including by  
23 subscribing to community solar facilities.