

# U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich



# SOLAR TOOLKIT

**STRATEGIES TO GO SOLAR**

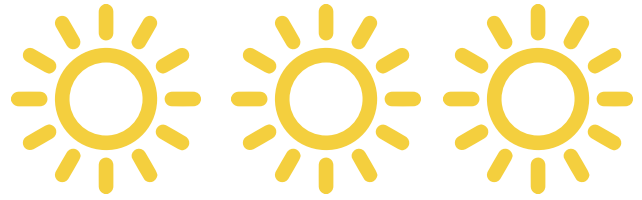


#SolarToolkit









# GO SOLAR

Dear Friend,

There is no doubt that solar works for New Mexico. The installed price of solar is lower than it ever has been, and more and more communities throughout New Mexico are building solar into their portfolios. Cities are saving taxpayer dollars, tribes are providing stipends to their members, and businesses in cities and rural communities alike are seeing lower utility bills.

Many of our communities are leading the nation in solar deployment because they are setting and achieving attainable goals: from realizing 25 percent of energy consumption coming from solar by 2025 to going carbon neutral. Best of all, the solar industry now employs almost 2,500 New Mexicans and added 1,000 jobs in 2016 alone.

I am proud to have led a bipartisan group of lawmakers to pass an energy agreement that included a five-year extension of the Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC), which fueled some of this growth. But the hard work from citizens, lawmakers, and businesses is what truly transformed how we power New Mexico.

It is my hope that this solar toolkit provides a launching point for local governments, tribes, schools, power providers, rural businesses, policymakers and educational institutions to consider whether solar can meet their needs. The toolkit highlights success stories from around the state, and provides reflections from the New Mexicans who have gotten the job done. It also highlights commonly used resources. Of course, my staff is also always available to you to help you connect with someone who can answer your questions.

Thank you for your interest in championing solar. I will continue to do everything I can to help New Mexico realize its bright potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Heinrich'.

MARTIN HEINRICH

United States Senator



SOLAR WORKS FOR

# LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



PHOTO: The City of Las Cruces completed a 280-panel solar parking structure at the Munson Center, one of many new solar projects in the community.

Over the past six years, the City of Las Cruces has invested \$5 million in almost 1.2 megawatts of solar projects at nine different facilities. These renewable energy investments represent almost 7 percent of the City's energy portfolio, garnering over \$300,000 annually in energy savings and renewable energy credits. Initially, the City utilized grants and loans from the Department of Energy, and Housing and Urban Development, and the New Mexico Finance Authority. As solar costs decreased, the City administration and the council recognized that the City Council could shift the trajectory of increasing energy costs and anticipated capital needs by using Hold Harmless/Gross Receipt Tax money for sustainable energy projects. Local governments in New Mexico are leading the way while saving taxpayer dollars.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY PROMOTES  
NEW TECHNOLOGIES & JOB  
OPPORTUNITIES AS THE CITY  
DEMONSTRATES THE VIABILITY  
OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY.**

- Ken Miyagishima, Mayor of Las Cruces

These investments not only help industries thrive but also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are more options than ever before for local governments to explore when it comes to financing solar projects including but not limited to public bonds, power purchase agreements, and implementing energy efficiency upgrades.

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# SOLAR WORKS FOR



PHOTO: Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery Solar System



PHOTO: Picuris Pueblo Solar System

## TRIBES



**THE BENEFITS FROM A SOLAR ARRAY PROJECT CAN GO A LONG WAY. WE ARE NOT ONLY ENJOYING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS, BUT WE ARE REDUCING THE HATCHERY'S CARBON FOOTPRINT.**



- TYNER CERVANTES, CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER AND FISH HATCHERY DIRECTOR

Tribal governments are choosing to go solar and have several resources and programs at their disposal to implement solar projects. The Office of Indian Energy has compiled the Energy Development Assistance Tool, a comprehensive list of federal funding and resources specifically for tribes. The Office is an incredible resource for tribes committed to implementing solar and can provide technical assistance, as do the Sandia National Laboratories Indian Energy Program and National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

The Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery installed a solar system for their hatchery tank through funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Hatchery Maintenance program. Hatchery Maintenance funding is available for hatcheries owned by Federally-recognized tribes. Prior to the installation, the monthly electricity bill for the tank house and the shop ranged between \$250 and \$300. After a month, they were able to significantly reduce their bill and even began seeing credits. The hatchery now produces more power than it consumes.

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# SOLAR WORKS FOR

# SCHOOLS



Schools across New Mexico are already realizing savings from going solar. Financing of solar projects for schools can take many forms, including a power purchase agreement (PPA), where a third-party owns and operates the system and passes on the savings. Non-profit K-12 schools and higher education institutions are also eligible for tax-exempt bonds, which can be used for low-cost financing of energy efficiency projects.

**“THIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PROJECTS OF ITS KIND IN NEW MEXICO & EVEN IN THE NATION.”**

-RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*PHOTOS: Rio Rancho Public Schools Solar System*



Rio Rancho Public Schools (RRPS) executed a PPA with Washington Gas and PNM that saves the district approximately \$700,000 per year in utility costs. RRPS owns the land on which the array is built, and Washington Gas owns the arrays. Power generated by the arrays in excess of the needs of the schools is returned to the grid and RRPS receives a credit applied against PNM's bill for the excess power generation. In addition, the presence of the solar arrays provides the schools with an educational resource that can be leveraged by classroom teachers in STEM instruction.

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# SOLAR WORKS FOR **RURAL SMALL BUSINESSES**



PHOTO: Tall Foods Ostrich Farm

Rural businesses and residents can take advantage of the many resources offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA RD). Small businesses and agricultural producers are also eligible for USDA RD's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). This program provides loans or grants to help finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for rural America. Tall Foods is a rural small business in San Miguel County that used the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant to get as close to 100 percent renewable energy as possible. After going solar, their largest monthly bill during the summer was only \$21.

**“  
GO SOLAR! IT'S A  
FANTASTIC  
ASSET AND HELPS  
US FURTHER OUR  
BRAND AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMMITMENTS.  
”**

- ANDREA D. ROMERO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL  
COALITION OF LANL COMMUNITIES

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Solar power presents a major opportunity to create jobs and investment in industries of the future – especially in rural areas – and to make the overall economy more innovative, productive, and clean. Thousands of New Mexicans work in this rapidly growing field. These jobs include installers, manufacturers, and sales. New Mexico colleges and universities have created programs to train New Mexicans in the skills they need to build the solar industry in our state. Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), in partnership with the University of New Mexico (UNM), recently unveiled a new certificate in Sustainable Building Technology. It equips students, including those currently working in the construction fields, to be more skilled and knowledgeable in the sustainable practices that are becoming more common in building technology.

# SOLAR CREATES JOBS IN NEW MEXICO



PHOTO: Rita, Solar Installer In New Mexico

**“THE CERTIFICATE IS BRAND NEW, SO THE INDUSTRY-SUPPORTED CURRICULUM IS CURRENT AND RELEVANT TO THE WORKPLACE.”**

- CENTRAL NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# SOLAR WORKS FOR POWER PROVIDERS

Rural electric cooperatives and municipal power providers across New Mexico are going solar. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service offers a number of electric programs to help rural electric cooperatives finance energy conservation and renewable energy projects through loans, loan guarantees, and grants. Los Alamos is home to the municipal-owned Department of Public

Utilities (DPU), a power producer. After surveying their community, the DPU found that 70 percent of their customers were willing to pay more on electric bills for renewable energy. In response, in 2013 the Los Alamos Board of Public Utilities (BPU) adopted a broad goal of being a "carbon neutral electric provider by 2040" and are implementing a series of recommendations that include more solar.

**“THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES ADOPTED A DEFINITION OF CARBON NEUTRAL AS THEY PURSUE THE GOAL ‘TO BE A CARBON NEUTRAL ELECTRIC PROVIDER BY 2040.’**

- LOS ALAMOS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES



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# SOLAR SUCCESS STORIES



VISIT MY SOLAR TOOLKIT FOR MORE SUCCESS STORIES

[heinrich.senate.gov/solar-success-stories](https://heinrich.senate.gov/solar-success-stories)

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# WANT TO GO SOLAR,

**BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?**



Visit my Solar Toolkit for more resources:

[Heinrich.Senate.Gov/solar-toolkit](https://Heinrich.Senate.Gov/solar-toolkit)

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