

CESA Members Meeting 2023

Participant Bios



Emily Asbury

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Emily Asbury is a Program Associate at the Illinois Power Agency ("IPA") for the Illinois Shines Program (formerly known as the Adjustable Block Program). In this position, Emily facilitates and tracks projects, develops updates to program requirements, oversees compliance by program participants, among other duties. Prior to joining the IPA, Emily served as the Environmental Programs Specialist for the City of Irving, Texas.



Shannon Maher Bañaga

Senior Managing Director, Strategic Communications
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Shannon Maher Bañaga leads our Power & Utilities work within FTI's Energy & Natural Resources sector. She provides senior counsel for energy clients in the public and government affairs arena, including direct advocacy, issues management, crisis communications, and stakeholder engagement. Most recently, she served as the Spokesperson for the Partnership for Clean Energy Investment advocating for the inclusion of direct pay in the Inflation Reduction Act. Ms. Bañaga began her career at the Department of Energy working on energy and environmental matters primarily involving nuclear waste. Subsequently, she joined the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Office of Enforcement as an Attorney-Advisor where she investigated violations of the Federal Power Act, Natural Gas Act, Natural Gas Policy Act, Interstate Commerce Act and the Commission's regulations. Ms. Bañaga holds a B.S. in Environmental Studies from Florida State University, an M.S. in Environmental Law and a J.D. from Vermont Law School.



Emily Basham

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Emily Basham is the Senior Manager of Partnership Development at the Connecticut Green Bank. She manages various strategic partnerships that further the implementation and development of Green Bank programs. Emily manages the Solar Municipal Assistance Program, providing technical assistance and project development support for underserved municipalities. She led the partnerships for single family solar programs, specifically, the Solar for All program to increase LMI solar and energy efficiency adoption in CT. Emily has extensive experience with stakeholder engagement around soft cost issues and low-income solar. Emily holds a B.A. in Environmental Science and Political Science from the University of Michigan (Go Blue!).

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**Maria Blais Costello**

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Maria Blais Costello is Manager of Program Administration for Clean Energy Group (CEG) and CESA; she is responsible for managing grants and communications for CESA and CEG projects.

Maria directs CESA's State Leadership in Clean Energy awards. Over the past 18 years, she has managed the development activities and special events for both organizations. She also serves as CEG's corporate secretary. Maria previously worked at Conservation Law Foundation, where she served as the office manager for the Vermont office. She graduated cum laude from the University of New Hampshire with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Economics.

**Vero Bourg-Meyer**

Project Director, Solar and Offshore Wind
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Vero Bourg-Meyer (she/her) serves as the Project Director for Solar Initiatives at the Clean Energy States Alliance, where she supports the organization's effort to develop impactful programs with U.S. states and the Department of Energy as part of the Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities project and the Offshore Wind Accelerator project. Prior to CESA, Vero worked in various capacities at Yale University, including as Program Director for Clean Energy at the Center for Business and the Environment. Vero practiced law, successively at international law firms Gide Loyrette Nouel and Hogan Lovells, in their project finance teams. Vero has advised clients on structuring roughly \$5.5 billion worth of infrastructure investments throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and North-East Asia. She holds a Master of Environmental Management (environmental policy) from Yale University, a French JD from the Universite de Droit de Montpellier, and a joint US/Chinese LL.M from Tsinghua Law School in Beijing, China. Vero is a member of the New York bar and the Paris bar.

**Brandon Bowser**

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Deana Carrillo
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Deana Carrillo serves as the Deputy Director of the Renewable Energy Division at the California Energy Commission. Prior to this role, she was the manager of the Local Assistance and Financing Office. Deana brings over 16 years of experience in leadership, public administration, clean energy policy, and finance to the position. Prior to joining the CEC, Deana was the Executive Director of the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA), serving under three different State Treasurers. At CAEATFA, she worked to develop and oversee various financing programs to support California's climate, economic development, and social equity goals. Deana has a Master of Public Policy degree from UCLA, with a focus in regional economic development and urban poverty, and a bachelor's degree from UC Santa Cruz in political science.



Sergio Carrillo
Managing Director, Clean Energy Incentive Programs
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Sergio Carrillo is Director of Incentive Programs with the Connecticut Green Bank, where he oversees all programs and efforts designed to deploy clean energy through incentives by the Green Bank. The Incentive Business's current programs include the Residential Solar Investment Program (RSIP), the Smart-E Loan, and the Solar for All Program. Before joining the Connecticut Green Bank, Sergio worked with Chesapeake Utilities Corporation where he held several positions, including Manager of Rates, Contracts and Regulatory Affairs, and most recently acted as Director of Corporate Development, overseeing Strategy development and implementation. Sergio also has extensive experience leading retail electricity pricing to residential, commercial, and industrial customers, as well as wholesale pricing procurement processes. He holds a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering, a M.Sc. in Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering from Penn State University, and an MBA from Duke University – The Fuqua School of Business.



Waylon Clark
R&D Electrical Engineer
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Waylon Clark has spent over a decade working in the field of electrical engineering, project management, and technical leadership. His experience includes developing both brown and green-field projects from initiation, design, and RFP to commissioning/operations. Waylon's expertise includes medium voltage substations, low voltage distribution, process controls, and data analytics. Currently he leads Sandia National Laboratories Demonstration Projects Team and is an R&D Electrical Engineer in the Energy Storage Technologies and Systems Department.



David L. Comis

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David serves as a Senior Energy Program Manager at the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA). His focus areas include solar energy, energy storage, nuclear energy and grid resilience. Prior to working at the Maryland Energy Administration, he helped the Department of Energy develop their first Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan and supported the Federal Energy Management Program in the areas of renewable energy and technology deployment. David's formal education includes a B.S. in Control Systems Engineering from the United States Naval Academy, a M.S. in Management from National-Louis University, and a M.S. in Energy Policy and Climate Change from Johns Hopkins University.



Austin Counts

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Austin Counts is the Rural-Industrial Clean Energy Program Manager with the Virginia Department of Energy's State Energy Office. In this role, he works to make clean energy technologies and funding accessible in rural and disadvantaged communities across Virginia. Prior to working with Virginia Energy, Austin was an AmeriCorps VISTA and Field Coordinator for an economic and environmental advocacy non-profit in Southwest Virginia, bringing renewable energy and the associated job opportunities to the coalfield region. He is an alumnus of The University of Virginia's College at Wise, receiving a B.S. in Environmental Science.



Jeffery Dennis

Deputy Director for Transmission
U.S. Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office

Jeff Dennis leads the Grid Deployment Office (GDO) Transmission Division, which facilitates transmission deployment, supports robust transmission planning, and addresses transmission siting and permitting challenges to ensure grid reliability and resilience. Prior to joining GDO, Jeff was General Counsel and Managing Director at Advanced Energy Economy (now Advanced Energy United), where he co-founded and later led its programs aimed at increasing wholesale electricity market access for advanced energy technologies and transforming wholesale electricity market designs and transmission policies to support the energy transition. Earlier in his career, Jeff spent over a decade at FERC, holding senior legal and policy positions including Director of Policy Development and Legal Advisor to Commissioner John R. Norris. Jeff also has been a lawyer in private practice. In addition to his work in GDO, Jeff is Chair-Elect of the American Bar Association's Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, and serves on the Editorial Board of the Energy Law Journal.

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Samantha Donalds
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Samantha serves as the Communications Coordinator for Clean Energy Group and the Clean Energy States Alliance. Samantha manages webinars, newsletters, social media, and press outreach. She serves as webmaster for both organizations and assists with publications and events. Samantha previously worked as an administrator at Fairewinds Energy Education, a nuclear safety advocacy non-profit in Burlington, Vermont. She has also worked as a research assistant in the environmental studies department at Brown University, where she researched fisheries projects in West Africa and compiled historic climate and fisheries data from southern New England. Samantha graduated cum laude from Mount Holyoke College with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a minor in French.



Ryan Dorland
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Ryan Dorland joined the Virginia Department of Energy as the Rural & Industrial Clean Energy Analyst for the State Energy Office in 2022. Dr. Dorland has degrees in physics from Minnesota State University and the Univ. of Minnesota, Duluth and a doctorate in environmental science from the Univ. of Massachusetts Boston. He has industry experience working as a biophysics manager for an algae-to-oil pilot facility in Hawaii and over a decade of academic experience including developing courses on environmental sensor technology and data science targeted for small colleges that lack computer science or engineering departments. Dr. Dorland is now focused on supporting the affordability, reliability, and innovation goals of the Virginia Energy Plan by providing research and analysis for clean energy projects in rural and underserved areas of Virginia.

Sarah Duffy

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**Gabe Epstein**

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Gabe Epstein is a Project Associate at the Clean Energy States Alliance. In this role, Gabe contributes to the Energy Storage Technology Advancement Partnership (ESTAP) and Solar with Justice. ESTAP aims to accelerate large scale electrical energy storage deployment through collaborative efforts with state energy agencies, US DOE Office of Electricity and Sandia National Laboratories. Solar with Justice focuses on how state agencies can collaborate with community-based organizations to develop impactful, equitable solar policies for underserved communities. Gabe received a master's degree and bachelor's degree both from Clark University, where he focused his research on equitable climate solutions and climate resilience. Gabe lives in Minneapolis, MN. In his free time he enjoys bike riding, cooking, and board games.

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**Tony Gonçalves (CESA Board Member)**

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Tony Gonçalves is a Supervising Resource Planner in the Resource Strategy Department at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). As the nation's sixth-largest community-owned electric service provider, SMUD's vision is to partner with its customers and community, provide innovative solutions to ensure energy affordability and reliability, improve the environment, and reduce the region's carbon footprint. Tony has been with SMUD since 2015, and is responsible for assessing RPS and carbon implications, development of SMUD's Integrated Resource Plan, and conducting economic analysis in support of SMUD's Zero Carbon Plan. Tony previously worked at two publicly owned utilities in California and started his

career at the California Energy Commission, where he spent over 20 years working on renewable energy issues, and was manager of the renewable energy office from 2009 – 2013. Tony holds a B.S. in Civil and Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Davis.

Naunihal (Nick) Singh Gumer

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Sara Harari

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Sara Harari is the Associate Director of Innovation and Senior Advisor to the President & CEO at the Connecticut Green Bank. She develops and supports programs to deploy green infrastructure across Connecticut. At the Green Bank, Sara co-chaired the Hydrogen Task Force and co-chairs the Innovation Advisory Council. She is the Green Bank representative to the Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate Advisory Board. She is a founding board member of ClimateHaven, a climatetech incubator. Previously, Sara worked at National Grid to accelerate the adoption of clean energy, with a focus on advanced control technology and ensuring equitable access. She started her career as an energy engineer at Jacobs Engineering. Sara holds an MBA from the Yale School of Management, an MEM from the Yale School of the Environment, and a BS in Civil Engineering from Tufts University. She is the Scholarship Coordinator for the Boston Chapter of the Women's Energy Network.



Abbie Hasenfus

Renewable Energy Programs Manager

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Abbie Hasenfus began working for the Office of Energy Resources (OER) in February 2022. In her role at OER, she manages several renewable energy programs. Abbie is also the public facing solar incentives expert for RI constituents. Prior to securing a full-time position, Abbie interned at OER through a 1-year fellowship in 2019, where she was responsible for conducting outreach work with Farmers to promote the RI Agricultural Energy Grant Program (RI AgEP). Abbie returned to URI in 2020 to get her master's degree in Environmental Economics and graduated with an MS in August 2021. Abbie is now the Manager for the RI AgEP, in addition to managing the Clean Energy Internship Program, which pairs college students with positions in the clean energy industry for a 12-week paid internship.



Edward Hsieh

Senior Program Manager, Workforce Equity
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At MassCEC, Edward Hsieh works to create opportunities for underserved and underrepresented individuals in the rapidly growing clean energy workforce. Edward oversees the \$12+ million of annual Equity Workforce Funding grants MassCEC is leveraging to establish more Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) in the clean energy sector and to train marginalized individuals to work at those MWBEs and other clean energy organizations. With other Workforce team members, Edward provides extensive technical assistance, convening opportunities, and networking assistance to grantees, as well as other key employers and organizations in the clean energy sector, to ensure that the grant awards result in the growth of a diverse, inclusive, clean energy workforce. Prior to MassCEC, Edward was COO of a community-based organization for three years where he oversaw workforce development programs targeted at Boston area communities. Prior to his time in workforce development, Edward served as Executive Director of two sustainability nonprofits for over 14 years.

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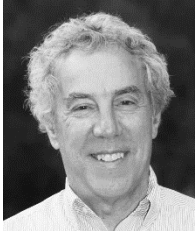
Betsy Kauffman (CESA Board Chair)

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Betsy Kauffman heads up Energy Trust of Oregon's renewable energy department, which provide cash incentives and technical assistance to solar, hydro, biopower, geothermal and wind projects in Oregon. The program has funded more than 8,000 commercial, residential, and large-scale solar projects and more than 20 hydro, bio, and geothermal projects. Along with a local neighborhood organization, Energy Trust operated the first Solarize effort in the nation. Prior to joining Energy Trust, Betsy worked at For the Sake of the Salmon where she managed the Salmon-Friendly Power program, one of Oregon's first programs to allow utility customers to choose a renewable power option. Betsy also has a long history in the news business, having spent ten years as an anchor and reporter at radio stations across the country. She has bachelor's degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and moonlights as a stand-up comic.

Jeff King

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**Warren Leon**

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Warren Leon was appointed Executive Director of Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) in June 2013, after serving CESA in several other capacities, including as Deputy Director. He oversees the organization's day-to-day operations and leads strategy development. He has written and edited many reports for CESA, including serving as lead author for *Advice for States on 100% Clean Energy Planning*, *Returning Champions: State Clean Energy Leadership Since 2015*, and *Solar with Justice: Strategies for Powering Up Under-Resourced Communities and Growing an Inclusive Solar Market*. Prior to working for CESA, Warren was Director of the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust, Executive Director of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, and Deputy Director for Programs at the Union of Concerned Scientists. He co-authored the influential book *The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices*. He holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

**Yohannes Mariam**

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Yohannes holds a Ph.D. from McGill University, Montreal (Canada). He has worked as a social scientist and economist for the Environment Canada and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. Currently, he works as a senior economist with the Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia. He is also an adjunct professor of economics and management. Yohannes has written extensively in several areas of economics, energy, and environment, and he serves as a reviewer for the International Journal of Energy Economics.

**Keith Martin**

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Keith Martin is a deal lawyer in the Washington office of Norton Rose Fulbright who has helped lead the project finance group at the firm for more than 20 years. The group did \$191 billion in project financings and closed 448 significant transactions in the last four years. The prestigious Chambers directory gives Keith its sole "star" ranking among US renewable energy lawyers. He worked for 204 companies last year on numerous transactions. He also lobbies the US Treasury and Congress on policy issues. He was an aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-WA) before moving to private law practice. He has edited the widely distributed Project Finance NewsWire for the last 26 years.



Hannah McCorry
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Hannah McCorry is the Graduate Fellow at the Illinois Power Agency (IPA). Hannah joined the IPA in May 2022. Prior to joining the IPA, Hannah worked as a Graduate Research Assistant at Illinois State University. In her role Hannah assisted in reports on the economic viability of Offshore Wind development for the Great Lakes, and conducted property tax impact studies of renewable energy development on school districts. Hannah holds a bachelor's in Economics from Illinois State University as well as a Master's in Applied Economics with a focus in Electricity, Natural Gas, and Telecommunications Economics from Illinois State University.



Claire McIlvennie
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Claire McIlvennie (she/her) serves as the Data and Equity Policy Manager for the Vermont Public Service Department. Claire provides leadership in these two core areas, helping ensure transparent and sound data practices and principles of energy equity underpin the Department's work. Claire also supports the Department's work related to the Renewable Energy Standard and related programs, utility integrated resource planning, and municipal and regional enhanced energy planning. In this role, Claire contributes to the work of the Science & Data and Just Transitions Subcommittees of the Vermont Climate Council and sits on the state's Interagency Environmental Justice Committee. Claire has degrees in Economics and Psychology (BA) from Middlebury College and Environmental Change and Management (MSc) from the University of Oxford. She is currently working on her PhD in Natural Resources at the University of Vermont which focuses on the intersection of human behavior, technology, and policy in the smart grid.

Brittany Mitchell
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Meghan Monahan
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Meghan Monahan is Clean Energy Group's Executive Assistant and Office Manager. She also serves as a project assistant for Clean Energy States Alliance. Her duties include managing staff schedules, administrative support, research, and event planning. Meghan is a magna cum laude graduate of Champlain College, where she majored in Business Administration.



Seth Mullendore

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Seth Mullendore is president and executive director of Clean Energy Group (CEG), where he oversees the organization's mission to advance energy justice and catalyze innovative energy strategies to address the climate crisis. He previously served as vice president and a project director for CEG, leading efforts to enable greater access to the benefits of solar PV and battery storage technologies for low-income communities and communities of color and working with community-based partners to phase out polluting power plants with clean alternatives. Seth is a contributing author to the 2022 book "Environmental Justice and Resiliency in an Age of Uncertainty," which examines various current environmental issues including energy justice. Prior to joining CEG, Seth served as a Sustainable Energy Fellow with Union of Concerned Scientists and worked with Maine Clean Communities to advance clean transportation initiatives. Before shifting careers to focus on energy and equity, Seth worked in the technology sector where he founded and managed a web development and online engagement company specializing in outreach services for colleges and universities. Seth holds a M.S. in Civil & Environmental Engineering from Stanford University and a B.S. in Geosciences from the University of Southern Maine.



Galen Nelson (CESA Board Member)
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Galen Nelson is the Chief Program Officer at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center where he oversees technology, market, and workforce development programs and initiatives across the organization's buildings, transportation and net zero grid sectors. Galen serves on MassCEC's executive team helping to inform organizational strategy and direction, and oversees the organization's emerging climate finance work. Prior to this role, Galen led MassCEC's Innovation and Industry Support division, where he created and managed several tech to market and commercialization acceleration programs, including in the microgrid, energy storage, and high-performance building sectors. Prior to joining the MassCEC, Galen led clean energy business and green affordable housing policy and program development efforts at the City of Boston. Galen has over ten years' experience conceiving, developing, and managing energy transition programs and policies at the City and State level often at the intersection of urban planning, economic development, and clean energy. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Colby College.

Pamela Nelson

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Matt Ohloff

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Matt Ohloff is the Project Manager for Solar Equity for Clean Energy States Alliance. In this role, he supports the Solar with Justice project, the Scaling Up Solar for Under-Resourced Communities project, and the National Community Solar Partnership for CESA. He is an experienced organizer with over 15 years' experience working in Iowa for several organizations with both a statewide and national presence, including Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Food & Water Watch, and the Iowa Environmental Council. Prior to joining CESA, he was Clean Communities Manager for the Iowa Environmental Council where he worked with communities to advocate for and implement an equitable transition to 24/7 carbon-free electricity. From 2016 to 2020, he was Climate Justice Organizer for Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, with responsibility for developing and managing that organization's climate justice program. He received his B.A. in Political Science from the University of Iowa and is currently completing a Master's in Public Administration at Drake University.



Todd Olinsky-Paul

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At Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), Todd directs the Energy Storage and Technology Advancement Partnership (ESTAP) project, which aims to accelerate large scale electrical energy storage deployment through collaborative efforts with state energy agencies, US DOE Office of Electricity and Sandia National Laboratories. Todd also works on Clean Energy Group's (CEG) Resilient Power project in the areas of solar+storage for critical infrastructure energy resiliency, distributed energy storage policy and economics, and is the CEG/CESA lead for state energy storage policy support. His recent work has focused on virtual power plants and the equitable incorporation of solar+storage into state clean energy policy and programs. Todd has an M.S. in Environmental Policy from Bard College and a B.A. from Brown University.



Ammar Qusaibaty

Co-Lead, U.S. DOE Interconnection Innovation e-Xchange (i2X)
U.S. Department of Energy

Dr. Ammar Qusaibaty co-leads the U.S. Department of Energy Interconnection Innovation e-Xchange (i2X) program, a community of practice, excellence, and innovation to enable simpler, faster, and fairer interconnection. He manages a wide range of research and innovation projects funded by the Department's Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO). In the past 10 years, Ammar managed key SETO programs. such as NRECA's Solar Utility Network Deployment Accelerator, Race to 7-Day Solar SunShot Prize, the SunShot Catalyze Prize, Solar in Your Community Challenge, and the Open Data Energy Initiative. Prior to joining SETO, he worked as an investment officer for a boutique \$100 million venture capital investment firm and served on several boards for startups. Ammar holds a PhD from the University of Paris I in Cognitive Informatics an MS from the University of Oxford in Abstract Mathematics, and an MBA from Georgetown University.



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Abbe Ramanan is a Project Manager at Clean Energy States Alliance and Clean Energy Group. In her role at CESA, Abbe specializes in equitable low-income solar policy. She manages the Solar with Justice: Connecting States and Communities project, which focuses on how state agencies can collaborate with community-based organizations to develop impactful solar policies for underserved communities. Abbe also leads CESA's work in the National Community Solar Partnership States Collaborative, which supports states seeking to expand access to community solar. At CEG, Abbe leads the Hydrogen Information and Public Education project, which aims to equip advocates, regulators, and policymakers with non-biased facts to counter irresponsible hydrogen proposals. Abbe also supports the Resilient Power Project, which strives to provide resilient power technologies like solar and battery storage to the communities that need it most. Abbe holds a master's degree in energy policy from The Fletcher School at Tufts University, as well as a bachelor's degree in international studies from American University.

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Yesenia Rivera

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Yesenia has been a community organizer from the start, working alongside climate-impacted communities. Her first-hand experiences of energy insecurity mobilized her to become an advocate for the elimination of barriers to solar for all. Yesenia Rivera started her career as a law student and Student Attorney for the Community Development Clinic. Then, as housing counselor and tenant organizer for the Latino Economic Development Center. She joined Solar United Neighbors in 2017 as DC programs Director and was promoted to Director of Energy Equity and Inclusion in 2019 where she launched a program that installed 0.5 MW of solar on income-qualifying households. At Energy Allies, we are building a people-centered culture inside and out to center communities in the climate movement.



Elizabeth Rubado
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Lizzie Rubado is the Director of Innovation and Development at Energy Trust of Oregon. During 17 years with Energy Trust, Lizzie helped the organization secure its first major outside contract to administer the Oregon Community Solar Program and created the award-winning, community-driven Solarize program. As Energy Trust's first director of innovation and development, Lizzie works to cultivate strategic partnerships, pursue new funding opportunities and elevate the organization's culture of innovation. She's a proven leader, skilled facilitator, fundraiser and charismatic spokesperson who excels at bringing people together to make change. She has a bachelor's degree in physics from Whitman College and lives in Portland, Oregon.



Georges Sassine
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Georges Sassine is the Vice President for Large-Scale Renewables at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). He leads NYSERDA's work in advancing both land-based renewable energy and offshore wind resources. Prior to joining NYSERDA in September 2021, he spent nearly ten years at General Electric (GE) where he took on a wide scope of responsibilities including strategy, scenario planning, product management, innovation, marketing and business development. He started his career in engineering and policy analysis roles with the United Nations Development Program in the Middle East and at a couple of think tanks in Washington, DC. Georges has also worked with several multinational corporations driving policy analysis, investment and business strategy including Deutsche Bank's Energy & Climate Change Advisors team in New York and Man Group's energy private equity fund in London. He is also the founder of a non-profit that advocates for transparency and good governance in the energy industry. Georges sits on the board of the Clean Energy States Alliance, a non-profit platform for states and public agencies to collaborate to advance clean energy in the United States. He holds a Bachelor in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering from the American University of Beirut, and a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard University.



Sam Schacht
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Sam Schacht is a CESA Research Associate, working on the Offshore Wind Accelerator and 100% Clean Energy Collaborative projects. He is deeply interested in issues around clean power and environmental justice. Previously, Sam worked at Groundswell, a solar developer based in Washington, DC, where he managed subscriber engagement and support for Groundswell's community solar projects and the DC Department of Energy and Environment's Solar for All program. He worked with a wide range of government offices, community-based organizations, and individuals committed to equitable clean power. He holds a bachelor's degree in History from the University of Rochester, with minors in Sustainability,

Anthropology, and German. Beyond CESA, Sam is involved in the Fix the Grid campaign, working to speed up the transition of New England's grid to clean power.



Austin Scharff

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Austin Scharff is a policy specialist at the Washington State Energy Office. His work focuses on energy markets and electric and natural gas utilities. He is currently working on implementation of Washington's 100% clean electricity standard, the Clean Energy Transformation Act, including its equity and low-income provisions. He also works on Washington's renewable portfolio standard, the Energy Independence Act. His past work includes contributions to the 2021 State Energy Strategy and rulemaking support for Washington's first-in-the-nation clean buildings performance standard. Austin holds Bachelor degrees in International Political Economy and Politics & Government from the University of Puget Sound and a Master's of Science degree in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.



MJ Shiao

Vice President, Supply Chain and Manufacturing
American Clean Power Association

MJ is Vice President of Supply Chain and Manufacturing for the American Clean Power Association (ACP). He leads initiatives to enable resilient supply chains and domestic manufacturing that support the sustained growth of the US clean energy industry. Prior to ACP, MJ led North America business development and market strategy for a leading global solar supplier, helping the company set up US solar manufacturing and a diversified and sustainable supply chain. MJ has worked in the clean energy sector for over 15 years with experience, including designing solar and storage systems, leading global market research teams and connecting consumers with clean energy through community solar. He was formerly head of content at Wood Mackenzie Power and Renewables, directing a global team of market analysts covering solar, wind, energy storage, and grid edge. MJ started his career in clean energy as an electrical engineer at Solar Design Associates.



Nicole Sitaraman

Acting Director, FERC Office of Public Participation
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Nicole Sitaraman is Acting Director of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Office of Public Participation, working in this role since February 2022. Ms. Sitaraman has over 15 years of experience in consumer and civil rights advocacy, energy legislative and regulatory affairs and stakeholder engagement. Prior to joining FERC, she served in legal and policy advocacy roles such as Vice President of External Affairs and Policy at Sustainable Capital Advisors, Senior Manager of Public Policy at Sunrun, and Assistant People's Counsel in the DC Office of the People's Counsel. She began working on energy and climate justice issues after serving as an attorney at one of the nation's leading civil rights litigation firms.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Sitaraman has provided strategic guidance for several climate, clean energy and environmental justice organizations. She earned her BA at Yale University and JD at Boston University School of Law.



Anthony Star

Senior Advisor and Interim Planning and Procurement Bureau Chief
Illinois Power Agency
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Anthony Star served as Director of the Illinois Power Agency from March 2013 through September 2022 and has recently moved into a new role as Senior Advisor and Interim Chief of the Planning and Procurement Bureau. Anthony's work at the IPA has included overseeing the development and implementation of plans to procure electricity and clean energy resources for customers of Ameren Illinois, ComEd, and MidAmerican. This includes the Agency's annual electricity plans for energy and capacity for default service customers, plans for Zero Emissions Credits and Carbon Mitigation Credits, and the Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan which guides the Agency's renewable resources activities including procurements for utility-scale wind and solar, the Adjustable Block Program to support photovoltaic distributed generation and community solar, and the Illinois Solar for All Program to support low-income photovoltaic projects. Anthony holds a BA in History and an MA in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago.

Karen Stewart

Renewable Energy Fund Manager
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Karen Stewart is the manager of the Renewable Energy Fund at RI Commerce. The REF assists RI businesses, non-profits, homeowners and renters by providing renewable energy grants and funding for Small-scale and Commercial Scale PV, Brownfield PV, Community Solar, energy storage and clean energy internships. Prior to joining the REF, Karen worked as a Community Outreach Manager for the Marion Institute and SmartPower, overseeing community energy challenges in southern New England towns and cities. As part of her commitment to the adoption of renewable energy and sustainable behavior change, Karen holds workshops for community groups, schools, and municipal leaders and contributes to trainings for installers interested in working in RI.



Danah Tench

Director of Clean Energy and Climate Resiliency
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Danah Tench is the Director of the Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) and Climate Resiliency at the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), where she coordinates the agency's internal clean energy and climate work with an agency wide team. In this role she also directs a multiagency Gap Energy Grant program which in January 2023 announced \$8.1 million dollars to municipal water facilities, nonprofit and small businesses in the agricultural, food producing and processing space and to nonprofit multifamily affordable housing organizations. Prior to taking this position, she served as Deputy General Counsel for Policy and Programs at MassDEP. Danah serves as co-chair of the Boston Bar Association's

Environmental and Energy Law Section and served as co-chair of the Air Quality and Climate Change Committee. Danah is the Commissioner's designee on the Mass Food Policy Council, a legislatively created multiagency, multi stakeholder food and agriculture council that works to increase farming and sales of MA grown foods and to support programs to bring healthy foods to everyone in the state. Danah is a graduate of Wellesley College and Tulane Law School.

Lisa Thomas

Engineer – Energy Services

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Daniel White

Energy Program Specialist

Department of Energy and Environment

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Daniel White has over 14 years of experience with the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) in Washington, DC. Daniel manages programs focused on providing access to tools and resources to encourage the integration of energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainability, and innovation into project developments across the District. His experience also includes leading collaborative efforts with federal, state and local partners to develop strategies and implement best practices for solar programs. Most recently, through the District of Columbia "Solar for All program", Daniel's work has focused on Community Solar project models to scale sharing the benefits of solar energy for households in the most vulnerable communities.



Pete Wyckoff

Assistant Commissioner for Federal and State Energy Initiatives

Minnesota Department of Commerce

Pete Wyckoff works to coordinate the Minnesota Department of Commerce's efforts to bring millions in federal funds available through the Infrastructure and Jobs Investment Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to Minnesota, which represent the largest federal funding in history for the nation's infrastructure and clean energy economy. Wyckoff previously worked in the Office of Minnesota U.S. Senator Tina Smith and served as Senior Policy Advisor for Energy, Climate and the Environment to support the Senator's work shaping IRA energy provisions. Prior to working for Senator Smith, Pete had a fellowship with the U.S. Department of Energy and worked in the office of former Minnesota U.S. Senator Al Franken. Pete is an emeritus professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM), where he served on the faculty for 15 years, and was the founding director of the UMM Environmental Studies Program. He is a graduate of Drew University and obtained his Ph.D. in forest ecology from Duke University.



Jose Zayas

Executive Vice President, Policy and Programs
American Council on Renewable Energy

José Zayas is responsible for leading ACORE's policy agenda, and implementation of ACORE's programs and comprehensive initiatives. José is an avid supporter of clean energy and has over 25 years of experience in the renewable energy and government sectors. Prior to joining ACORE, José served as the Sr. Vice President at Eagle Creek RE, one of the country's premier independent hydropower power producers. Prior to joining Eagle Creek in 2017, José served as Director of the Wind and Water Power Technologies Office at the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE). In that role, José led efforts to improve performance, lower costs, and accelerate deployment of wind and water power technologies. Prior to joining USDOE in 2011, José spent fifteen years at Sandia National Laboratories. While at Sandia, José served in several leadership positions, including as Senior Manager for the Renewable Energy division. José holds an MS in Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering from the University of California at Davis.



Anna Ziai

Project Director for State Implementation of Federal Climate Legislation
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Anna Ziai serves as CESA's Project Director for State Implementation of Federal Climate Legislation. She supports the 100% Clean Energy Collaborative by helping states implement the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including advising them of the most relevant funding opportunities and on the implications of their implementation. Anna is a licensed attorney admitted to the Oregon State Bar. Before CESA, Anna served the Sierra Club's federal Environmental Law Program, where she drafted memoranda and formal comments under federal environment legislation and furthered the organization's environmental justice research. Anna earned her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. She completed associate positions with major law firms and the UChicago Abrams Environmental Law Clinic. She represented clients such as the Center for Biological Diversity and frontline community organizations bringing clean energy to disadvantaged communities. In her free time, Anna enjoys open water swimming and practicing the art of resting.