



**FlaSEIA Leads Charge to Allocate Millions in Unspent Stimulus
Money to Cover a Portion of the State's Unpaid Solar Rebates
August 17, 2010**

The Florida Solar Energy Industries Association (FlaSEIA) has long been an advocate of paying the thousands of Floridians still owed rebates from the state's Solar Rebate Program. Today, many of those Floridians will receive their rebates. FlaSEIA commends the Florida Energy and Climate Commission (FECC) for its recent action to pay some of the more than 15,000 applications that have been filed for solar energy rebates.

In a letter to FECC Chairman James Murley, FlaSEIA strongly urged the Commission to consider using reallocated money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds towards the existing backlog in the Florida Solar Rebate Program. This course of action would quickly put the money back in the hands of the citizens of Florida who have already made a commitment to renewable energy. FlaSEIA also believes that this action would provide credibility to future incentive programs.

The Florida Solar Energy Incentives Program, which began in 2006, paid up to \$20,000 for solar electric panels on Florida homes. However, the program has received no money from the Legislature since 2008 and expired under state law on June 30, 2010. The backlog of \$54 million in requested rebates continues to increase as applications for work performed on or before June 30 are received.

Earlier this month, Bruce Kershner, FlaSEIA Executive Director, was appointed to a Special Advisory Group chaired by FECC Commissioner Kathy Baughman McLeod to review the history of Florida's rebate programs, the current status of the rebate programs and discuss how to move forward with the Solar Rebate Program. The group also had representation from Steve Kaufman, Kaufman Lynn Energy, the Florida Retail Association, Progress Energy Florida, the law firm of Akerman Senterfitt and the Universal Unitarian Church of Tallahassee (a previous recipient of a solar rebate). Kershner encouraged the group not to create any new rebate programs until the current Solar Rebate Program backlog was addressed. It was the recommendation of the group to allocate \$13.8 million of the federal State Energy Program (SEP) funding, provided to Florida through the ARRA, to the Solar Rebate Program. That recommendation was recently presented to the FECC. Kershner also made comments to the FECC during their recent meeting that the commission had a opportunity to instill trust in Floridians by reallocating these funds to pay down the current backlog of solar rebates.

On Friday, August 13, 2010, the FECC agreed to use \$13.8 million in federal stimulus dollars to pay for some of that backlog. The U.S. Department of Energy approved using the federal stimulus money, said Rob Vickers, Executive Director of the Governor's Energy Office. Vickers said his office would continue to seek additional funding for the rebate program as it becomes available.

Regards,

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