Increasing Access to Solar & Lowering Energy Burdens

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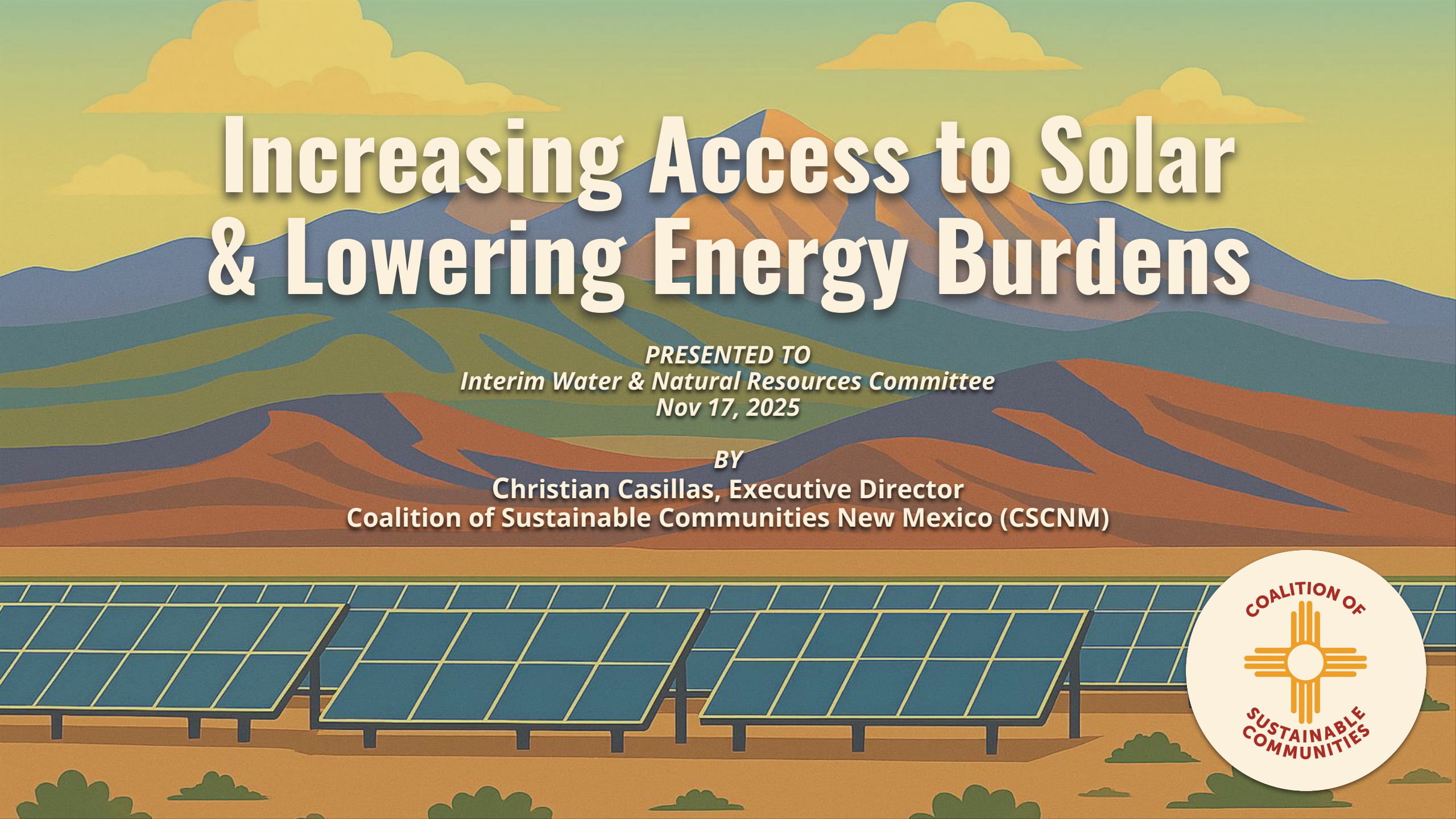
BY
Christian Casillas, Executive Director
Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico (CSCNM)



High Energy Burdens for New Mexicans

- **330,000 low-income households** in New Mexico.
- That mix of LI households is fairly evenly split between **homeowners (55%)** and **renters (45%)**.
- 150,000 households in New Mexico spend up to **15% of their annual income on utilities**.
- Middle income families spend 2-3% annually.
- **Lowering energy costs for families, brings critical resources back home.**

Pathways to reducing Energy Burdens

Increase Energy Efficiency

- Vastly scale state funding for energy efficiency and weatherization programs (**e.g., CEED**) to low-income households
- Increase opportunities for financing appliance upgrades and retrofits through **tariff on-bill financing** and **loans**

Decrease energy costs

- Low-income rates
- Increase access to solar

Benefits of solar generation remains inaccessible for most households

- Solar generation is **one of the least cost forms of electricity generation**. Distributed generation allows households to contribute to the energy transition while reduce their electricity bill.
- The **high upfront cost of rooftop solar** (often $15,000+) is a barrier for lower income households, and unattainable for renters (Over 200,000 renters in NM)
- While the majority of rooftop solar owners nationwide are middle and upper income, there are **multiple best-practices that can be implemented or scaled in New Mexico to increase access**.

Community Solar

Phase 1:

- 47 projects, 200 MW
- 50% reserved for Low-Income Subscribers
- 40% (80 MW) carved out for income qualified residential customers (~20,000 households)
- LI customers should see 15-20% annual bill savings (~ $200/yr on an ave $100 monthly bill)

Phase 2:

- 300 MW
- An additional ~30,000 households if Phase 2 projects have similar bid commitments

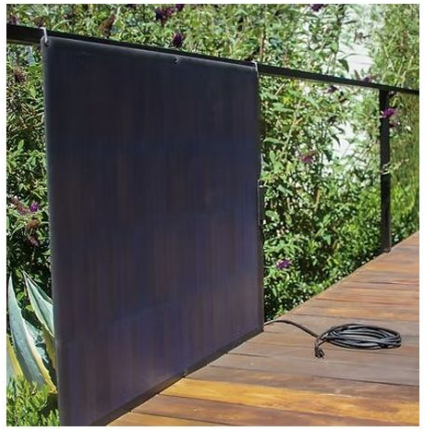
Take-away:

Community Solar is a critical component of an equitable energy transition in NM, and **needs to scale to reach more households** .

Plug-in Solar (Balcony Solar)

- Small, modular PV units (≤1200W) that plug into a standard outdoor outlet.
- Feed power directly into the home's electrical system like an **appliance in reverse**.
- Offset grid use and reduce utility bills. Installation with certified safety standards.
- 10% adoption rate would add 15 MW of solar
- **Elimination of soft costs**: no installer (DIY), no permits, no interconnection agreement with utility
- $600 - $5000, depending on size and battery back-up. Payback < 5 years

Balcony setup



Backyard setup

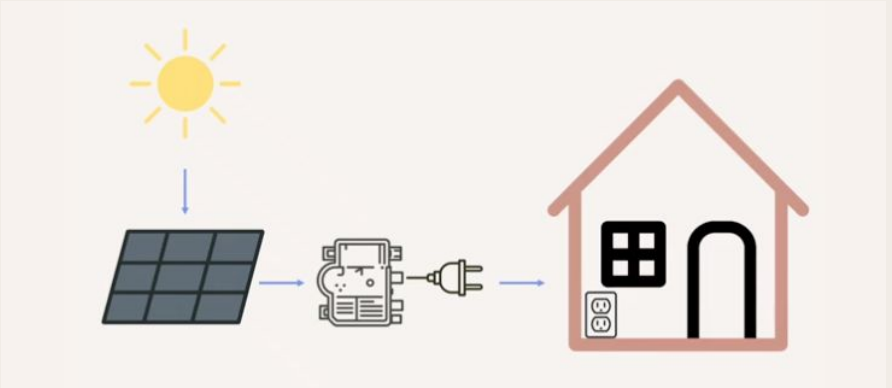
Source: https://www.brightsaver.org/

Plug-in Solar (Balcony Solar)

Utah Is Leading the Way Utah H.B. 340 (2025): A **bipartisan, budget-neutral model**

- Defines small PV systems (≤1,200W) as a new class
- Waives interconnection and net metering agreements
- Allows small and safe amounts of backfeeding
- Releases utilities from liability
- Allows self-installation with certified safety standards

Legislators in VT, NH, NY, PA, and MD have publicly announced they'll be **carrying legislation in 2026**.



Source: https://www.brightsaver.org/

Take-away:

Eliminate soft costs and make solar available to renters (like an appliance) . Need **state legislation** to bring balcony solar products to NM.

Learn More About Programs that reduce energy burdens:

Community Solar

- https://www.coalitionscnm.org/community-solar

Plug-in Solar

- https://www.coalitionscnm.org/roundtables
- https://www.brightsaver.org/

LI Energy Efficiency

- https://www.coalitionscnm.org/resilient-homes-nm

Contact
christian@coalitionsnm.org