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CA SOLAR INDUSTRY GROWING DIVERSITY IN WORKFORCE, MARKETPLACE

**CALSEIA Launches New Workforce Diversity & Market Access Initiative to Further
Diversify Its Growing Industry**

Sacramento - Citing new statistics showing an upward trend toward workforce diversity within the California solar industry, and riding a wave of success for programs to install solar in low-income communities, the California Solar Energy Industries Association (CALSEIA), has launched a new initiative to further diversify its growing industry and marketplace.

To guide the association's diversity initiative, a new "Workforce Diversity and Market Access" committee was formed in early March. The new committee is co-chaired by Jeanine Cotter, president of the solar installation company Luminalt, and Willis White, founder and president of Solar Oversight, a solar developer based in Oakland. Unanimously approved by the CALSEIA Board of Directors, the committee was established to recruit more women and minorities into California's growing solar market.



**Jeanine Cotter,
President, Luminalt**



**Willis White, president of
Solar Oversight**

"As in nature, the more diverse an industry the stronger and more resilient it is," said Jeanine Cotter, one of a few women in California who holds a solar specialty contractor license. Ms. Cotter runs San Francisco's only certified woman owned solar installation company, Luminalt, which she co-founded more than a decade ago and sits on the CALSEIA Board of Directors. "As a business owner, I seek out a diverse workforce and clients because it is good for business and good for the community."

A second element of CALSEIA's diversity initiative is to increase solar access for more consumers through public policy. For example, in collaboration with the Center for Sustainable Energy and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, with funding through a DOE SunShot grant, CALSEIA is working to break open solar access to those living in multi-family housing projects.

"California policy has put the power of the sun into the hands of nearly a half a million people," pointed out Co-chair Willis White, founder Solar Oversight, a company that specializes in assisting commercial non-profits to obtain financing to access solar. "Yet we've only scratched the surface, covering less than 2% of the state's rooftops with solar panels, and we have yet to truly break into rental or low-income markets."

A recent report by the [Solar Foundation](#) found that California's solar industry workforce is growing in diversity among women, African Americans, Latinos, and veterans.

"The data shows the solar industry is increasingly diverse and on an upward growth trend. Progress is being made and CALSEIA is committed to accelerating it," said Ms. Cotter.

Furthermore, California's typical solar customer has evolved dramatically to include a mainstream, budget-conscious consumer who's as likely to live inland as along the coast. For several years, Fresno has more solar power than Los Angeles, and to this day, the solar industry is supplying a growing statewide market from Chico to Coachella Valley fueled by consumers seeking relief from rising energy costs.

"California's solar industry now employs more people than the state's five largest utilities combined, and we've barely begun to take advantage of what this market can do for California's economy," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, CALSEIA's Executive Director. "There is a tremendous opportunity for business leaders and policy makers to work together to grow this promising industry, and in so doing, diversify and grow the state's economy as well."
