

Bridge Loan to Support the Deployment of NYS Solar Projects

East Light Partners, PBC

On May 6, 2020, NY Green Bank (“**NYGB**”) provided a 24-month senior secured \$3 million bridge loan facility (the “**Bridge Loan**”) to ELP BV 1, LLC (“**Borrower**”), owning projects developed by East Light Partners PBC (“**East Light**”). Bridge Loan proceeds will finance late stage development costs for community distributed generation (“**Community DG**”) and Large Scale (“**LSR**”) solar photo-voltaic projects. The projects supported by this transaction are expected to provide New York State (“**NYS**”) residents and businesses with lower-cost clean energy opportunities.

Transaction Description

East Light is developing a portfolio of Community DG and LSR solar projects in NYS and requested that NYGB provide a \$3 million Bridge Loan to finance late-stage development costs for such projects, including interconnection deposits due under the New York State Public Service Commission (the “**Commission**”) Standardized Interconnection Requirements and Application Process.¹

This transaction supports 72 MW of solar assets in the State which are expected to: (i) provide commercial and residential project subscribers access to reliable, clean, low-cost energy; and (ii) reduce up to 754,228 metric tons of greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions annually in NYS. As there has been an increasingly strong demand for Community DG and LSR solar throughout NYS, capital providers are recognizing, and will continue to recognize, the value in providing financing to enable the deployment of these projects. NYGB expects the Bridge Loan product to serve a template for private capital to build on.

This Transaction Profile is provided pursuant to the “NY Green Bank – Metrics, Reporting & Evaluation Plan, Version 3.0” (the “**Metrics Plan**”) developed in collaboration with the NYS Department of Public Service and filed with the Commission on June 20, 2016.²

Form of NYGB Investment

NYGB Product	Product Sub-Type	Committed Capital
Asset & Investment	Bridge Loan	\$3 million

Locations of Underlying Projects

Capital Region. The first projects in the Bridge Loan will be located in Dutchess County, NY, Columbia County, NY.

¹ Under the revised NYS Standardized Interconnection Requirements, within 90 business days of receiving the Coordinated Electric System Interconnection Review (“**CESIR**”) results, interconnection applicants must pay the applicable utility 25.0% of the interconnection upgrade estimates.

² Case 13-M-0412.

Types of Client & Counterparty Organizations that are Transaction Participants

	Name	Participant Type
Client	East Light Partners, PBC	Energy Project Developer
Counterparties (current)	National Grid, NYSEG, and Central Hudson	Electric Utilities

Summary of Financing Market Objectives & Barriers Addressed

Beneficiary	Market Barrier	Financing Solution
Solar Project Developers	Project sponsors are often expected to pay for interconnection expenses with equity funds as they finalize construction financing arrangements. This results in a relatively inefficient use of sponsor equity, which limits project deployment efforts and effectively restricts the amount of Community DG and LSR being deployed in NYS, slowing the rate of deployment.	This transaction encourages a more efficient use of sponsor equity and supports project development efforts in NYS by bridging the period in which project sponsors need to finalize project financing arrangements for projects for which the CESIR or Facilities Study process has been completed. NYGB's role will create an easier pathway forward for developers and will enable greater deployment of community and other distributed generation assets throughout the State.
Capital Market Participants	As a relatively new form of clean energy project, Community DG lacks financing precedents and has limited performance history in NYS. As such, it can be more difficult for private sector capital providers to assess and price the underlying risk exposures associated with Community DG project investments.	Projects supported as a result of this transaction will generate project and customer performance data to draw new investors and financial institutions into the marketplace by demonstrating that competitive risk-return profiles can be achieved by Community DG-enabled business models.
Community DG Subscribers	Due to project siting, property ownership and consumer preference issues, on-site solar project installations may not be viable for a number of NYS homeowners, renters, and businesses. This limits the number of solar projects getting done to those with suitably sited homes or businesses.	This transaction supports the deployment of Community DG solar projects, which provide those who are not otherwise able to install solar energy generation systems on their property (e.g., homeowners whose rooftops cannot support solar systems, renters and those who cannot afford solar stand-alone systems), with voluntary access to clean, low-cost energy, regardless of where their home or business is located.

Technologies Involved

Technology	Measures
Renewable Energy	Solar photovoltaic systems

Metrics & Evaluation Plan

Planned Energy & Environmental Metrics

NYGB’s minimum investment criteria specifically require that “transactions will have the potential for energy savings and/or clean energy generation that will contribute to greenhouse [(‘GHG’)] reductions in support of New York’s energy policies”.³ In addition, the Metrics Plan requires that the following energy and environmental measures applicable to this transaction be reported on⁴:

- Estimated gross lifetime and first-year electricity savings (MWh);
- Estimated gross lifetime and first-year fuel savings (MMBtu); and
- Estimated gross lifetime and first-year GHG emission reductions (metric tons).

The estimated gross lifetime and first-year energy and environmental impacts of the Bridge Loan, are as follows:

Energy/Environmental Impact	Lifetime Low Estimate	Lifetime High Estimate	Annualized Low Estimate	Annualized High Estimate
Estimated clean energy generated (MWh)	582,811.56	1,507,771.20	23,312.46	60,310.85
Estimated clean energy generation installed capacity (MW) ⁵	20.10	52.00		
Estimated GHG emission reductions (metric tons) ⁶	291,537.94	754,227.50	11,661.52	30,169.10

Planned Market Characterization Baseline & Market Transformation Potential

The Metrics Plan requires that market evaluation occurs when a critical mass of NYGB financing and investment arrangements are put in place, approximately three to five years following initial NYGB capital deployments. Market evaluation activities commenced in 2018 on sectors that have been supported by NYGB since its inception, and the data set will be updated going forward to include indicators specific to this and other transactions. Baseline data will be used as a comparison point against which to assess market progress in the later studies. Progress indicators are defined below for the short, mid and long-terms.

Short-term progress indicators will identify early activity levels and will be regularly tracked for the duration of the transaction. These include, but are not limited to:

- Size (i.e., generation capacity and expected dollar value) and location of projects financed by the Bridge Loan;
- Aggregate expected energy generation for projects financed by the Bridge Loan; and
- The number of projects that finalize construction financing arrangements.

Mid and long-term indicators will be expected to show progress through program tracking or market evaluation over time. These include, but are not limited to:

- Market volume of East Light Partners projects increases;
- General understanding of renewable energy benefits by financial community increases;
- Increased awareness and use of Community DG subscriber performance data by financing entities;
- Increased awareness and use of project/technology performance data by financing entities;
- Demonstration of competitive risk-return profiles for Community DG solar investment;
- Decreased project costs;

³ Case 13-M-0412, “Order Establishing New York Green Bank and Providing Initial Capitalization” issued and effective December 19, 2013 of the Commission, Ordering Clause 6 at pages 24 – 25.

⁴ See Metrics Plan, Section 2.0, pages 2 - 6.

⁵ Installed clean energy generation capacity at full deployment of funds is the same for first-year and lifetime duration.

⁶ As of January 1, 2016, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (“NYSERDA”) utilizes a 1,103 lbs./MWh conversion factor to estimate GHG emissions reductions for electric generation and energy efficiency savings across all components of the Clean Energy Fund. NYSERDA previously utilized a 625 lbs./MWh conversion factor.

- Volume of secondary market financing of Community DG solar assets; and
- Number of new lending participants.

Proposed Method of Outcome/Impact Evaluation (by NYSERDA) & Timeframe

NYSERDA will evaluate the impact this transaction has had on the clean energy finance markets and the energy/environmental benefits which it delivers.

Market evaluation will address the short, mid and long-term indicators identified above. Methods will include analysis of program data along with interviews and surveys of market participants (project subscribers, financial community) to track information including but not limited to: participation rates, project scale information, interest in solar financing (generally and with regard to Community DG specifically), and influence of NYGB's participation on financial markets. As noted, baseline data was collected on key indicators in the first phase evaluation during 2018 – 19. Later follow-up studies will assess progress against baseline levels for other market segments as those evolve. The specific timing of these efforts may be revised based on experience or other factors as NYGB's investment portfolio further develops and evolves.

Impact evaluation will assess which of the projects funded under the Bridge Loan raised construction financing and were completed, commissioned, and placed in service.

As with all NYGB investments, East Light Partners projects that receive an incentive or funding from other entities (e.g., utility, other NYSERDA program) will, in accordance with the Metrics Plan, be tracked in order to minimize any double-counting activity on a consolidated basis. As set out in the Metrics Plan, evaluation sampling approaches will also be used as a mechanism to estimate overlap and minimize double counting. Attempts will be made to coordinate market and impact evaluation activities for these projects that receive support from multiple sources in order to maximize the efficiency of data collection and avoid participant survey fatigue.