



Media Contact: Briana Sapp Tivey
Director of Marketing and Communications
Email: bsapptivey@sbnature2.org
Tel: 805-682-4711 ext. 117

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBMNH Sea Center Goes Solar with Solarize Nonprofit Program

Thanks to support from CEC, Asteri Solar, Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc., and Mission Wealth

Santa Barbara, California (December 12, 2019) — Community leaders joined Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Sea Center Board of Trustees and staff, and representatives from Community Environmental Council (CEC), Asteri Solar, Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc., and Mission Wealth on Thursday, December 12 to celebrate the installation of the new 52-kilowatt solar electric system as part of CEC's Solarize Nonprofit program.

The Sea Center's new photovoltaic solar electric system is expected to provide approximately half of the building's electricity for the next 25 years.

CEC's Solarize Nonprofit pilot program is designed to help local nonprofits go solar and run off renewable energy without an upfront cost. The program grew out of CEC's residential Solarize program, which has helped 800 homeowners go solar. The installation at the Sea Center was funded in partnership by CEC, Asteri Solar, and Mission Wealth, and installed by local company Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc.

The Sea Center is the fifth nonprofit to complete installation through the program, following the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition, Girls Inc. of Carpinteria, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Central Coast-Santa Maria Campus, and Santa Barbara Rescue Mission. In sum, these projects will total 159 kW of solar energy.

The Sea Center is projected to save more than \$300,000 on future electricity bills over the life of the panels by using solar power. The savings will be directed back into the Sea Center's programs and exhibits that educate the public about the Santa Barbara Channel.

Museum President & CEO Luke J. Swetland shared, "We had been exploring how to install solar on our Sea Center facility for years, but it wasn't until CEC and their partners approached us that we were able to get over the significant financial challenges to achieve this milestone. Thank you for helping us become a more green enterprise."

"We are so happy to see the Sea Center transition to renewable energy. As a highly visible, attractive installation, the system is a demonstration project for residents and visitors alike on embracing sustainability and supporting our city's 100% renewable energy goal," noted CEC Renewable Energy Program Manager April Price.

"We love a good challenge, we spent a long time designing this system to best meet the Sea Center's goals. Because of the amount of water pumping in the exhibits and the high electricity bill, it was essential for us to maximize the roof space, SunPower panels are really the only choice because not only do they make the highest efficiency panel on the market with the longest warranty, but they are also the *only* panel manufacturer to warranty their product in a marine environment. We hope that the visibility of this project inspires others to go solar and realize it is the right thing to do for the environment and for their pocket book. There is no other appliance that you can install in your home



or business that the moment you turn it on, it starts giving you money back,” added Cecilia Villaseñor Johnson, President – CEO, Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc.

The solar project is part of an organization-wide effort at the Museum and Sea Center to be as environmentally responsible as possible, in line with their vision to connect people to nature for the betterment of both. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Sea Center have recently been certified as California Green Businesses at the highest Innovator level.

Asteri Solar launched in 2018 to support the community through impact investing in solar for nonprofit organizations.

While Solarize Nonprofit has already identified several nonprofits for funding through the pilot, there may be additional capacity for the program. Eligible nonprofits must own their buildings or be in long-term leases and have facilities suitable for solar. Nonprofits may apply at [SolarizeNonprofit.org](https://www.solarizenonprofit.org).

###

About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being naturally different. Built in 1987 and located on historic Stearns Wharf, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center is a highly interactive regional aquarium and marine education facility that offers visitors close encounters with marine animals, and exploration of the Santa Barbara Channel on the Wet Deck. In addition to permanent exhibits, the Sea Center hosts unique events and special educational programming, including Underwater Parks Day, World Oceans Day, and its Live Dive series. For more information visit sbnature.org.

About CEC

Since 1970, CEC has led the Santa Barbara region—and at times California and the nation—in creative solutions to some of the toughest environmental problems. CEC pioneers real-life solutions in areas with the most impact on climate change. Their programs—including the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival—provide pathways to clean vehicles, solar energy, resilient food systems, and reduction of single-use plastic. Their commitment to excellence has made CEC one of only three nonprofits in Santa Barbara County to earn the highest possible ratings from both Guidestar and Charity Navigator. Find CEC on the web at www.CECSB.org and on Facebook.com/CECSB, Instagram.com/CEC_SB and Twitter.com/CECSB.



Sea Center with solar panels installed



Left to right: Matthew Adams (Mission Wealth), April Price (CEC), Seth Streeer (Mission Wealth), Cecilia Villaseñor Johnson (Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc), Richard Smalldon (Sea Center), Luke J. Swetland (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History & Sea Center)