



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Philadelphia Religious Groups Press Power Company, PECO, on Solar Energy and Green Jobs

POWER LOCAL GREEN JOBS campaign seeks investment in North Philly

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Citing job development and environmental justice, Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild (POWER) and Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) have joined forces in a campaign to press PECO to purchase solar power from North Philadelphia rooftops. This announcement follows ten months of negotiations and activism by EQAT to convince executives of PECO to shift its purchasing power from outside sources to job-hungry local communities.

Rabbi Julie Greenberg of POWER said, “Environmental justice means an economy that works for everyone. We need to create jobs where they are most needed and keep our energy dollars circulating locally. In a neighborhood desperate for jobs, North Philadelphia’s vast acreage of flat rooftops is an asset crying out for development.”

EQAT comes to this alliance fresh from its victorious 5-year campaign to convince PNC Bank to stop financing mountaintop removal coal mining. POWER recently celebrated victories in raising the living wage for city subcontractors, and a successful 2-year campaign to build jobs and justice into the city’s contract with Comcast. POWER brings to this solar jobs campaign 60 congregations of all faiths throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.

“We know the power of faith to move mountains.” said Eileen Flanagan, Board Chair of EQAT. “We are in this for the long haul and are thrilled that POWER is bringing tens of thousands of concerned citizens into this movement for local green jobs. We can help PECO fulfill its stated commitment to the people of this region.”

PECO is mandated by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to increase its supply of solar energy, but has been unwilling to refute rumors that it will source it out of state.

Pastor Greg Holston, co-chair of POWER’s Economic Dignity Team and national president of OIC of America, said, “Some corporations like to claim that they are good neighbors because they distribute charity here and there. We are not here for charity; we are here for justice. These are our energy dollars and we want to invest them in our neighborhoods. PECO can help end poverty in Philadelphia.”

May 2nd is the deadline for PECO to respond with a plan to source solar energy and create jobs locally. A small group of representatives will visit PECO headquarters on that date to hear their proposal. A large public turnout is planned for May 10th either to celebrate this agreement or to escalate the campaign.

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POWER is a multi-faith network throughout Philadelphia and surrounding counties working toward economic dignity, quality education and racial justice for all. POWER's sixty congregations meet together monthly to organize campaigns for meaningful policy change.

www.powerinterfaith.org

Earth Quaker Action Team includes Quakers and people of diverse beliefs using nonviolent direct action to build a just and sustainable economy. EQAT (pronounced "equate") won its first campaign in 2015, forcing PNC Bank to halt millions of dollars of financing to companies engaged in mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia. Following that success, EQAT's new campaign is pressuring local utility PECO to POWER LOCAL GREEN JOBS through solar expansion, particularly in North Philadelphia. www.eqat.org