

**To: SD46 Board of Trustees**  
**From: Sunshine Coast Community Solar**  
**Date: April 13, 2015**  
**Subject: Submission to the Strategic Plan - Expression of Interest in a Community Partnership with SD46 to Promote Solar Power**

Sunshine Coast Community Solar (SCCS), a collaboration of the Gibsons Green Team and Sunshine Coast in Transition, is moving forward with several local solar initiatives, among them the establishment of one or more community solar gardens. We recognize tremendous benefits—environmental, educational, and financial—that such an undertaking would confer to our community.

The possibility of partnering with SD46 to install a solar garden on a school roof or other property is particularly compelling, as it would especially benefit our youth. Student involvement in various age-appropriate activities during installation, and on an ongoing basis afterwards, would provide a wide range of learning opportunities. These include the acquisition of valuable skills in alternative energy technology and installation, the capacity to monitor power generated and consumed on site, and the development of a deep, general understanding of critical energy issues. Importantly, a school roof-top solar array could provide a solutions-focused context for difficult learning around climate change and pollution, thereby creating an extraordinarily empowering experience for the students of SD46 as they grow into their roles as consumers, workers, policy-makers and good citizens.

Significant improvements in the cost and efficiency of solar panels, solar water heaters, and supporting technology combined with current and projected increases in utility rates create a viable financial foundation for these projects. This has already been proven by successful solar array installations on Salt Spring Island, in Duncan, and in other regions with annual insolation rates comparable to the Sunshine Coast. Beyond simply breaking even, such ventures can offer financial returns. On Salt Spring, for example, profits from the school-top array feed in to a scholarship fund for graduates.

SCCS is currently in the early planning stages of our community solar garden initiative. We'll be communicating with key stakeholders in the coming months, assessing the many possible opportunities and challenges. In the meantime, we hope the school board will consider a community partnership with SCCS as an element in your upcoming 4-year strategic plan. We believe that such a partnership could complement both your pedagogical and operational carbon-footprint reduction goals.