



Georgia's 2017

# CLEAN WATER HEROES

Solar Crowdsource

## GEORGIA'S RIVERS

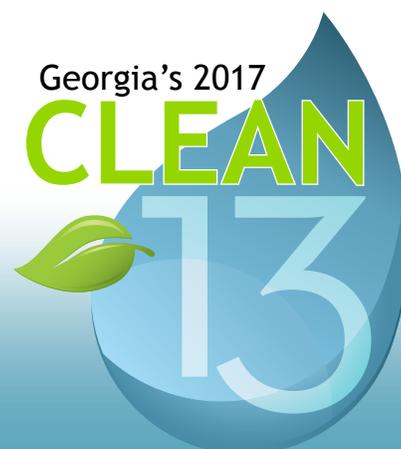
Solarize Campaigns Help Save Homeowners Money While Saving Georgia's Rivers

### INTRODUCTION:

On the national level, the federal government is currently dismantling the country's clean energy programs. Funding for clean energy research is on the cutting block, the country has withdrawn from the landmark Paris climate accord and rules governing air emissions and toxic discharges to the nation's waterways from coal-burning power plants are in jeopardy. Yet on the local level, communities are embracing clean energy projects. The Department of Energy now reports that nearly twice as many people in the U.S. work in the solar industry as work at coal, oil and natural gas plants; in Georgia an estimated 4,000 people work in the solar industry. Among the companies employing these workers is Decatur-based Solar Crowdsource that facilitated significant community roof top solar installations in Athens-Clarke County and DeKalb County. The more than 200 homes and businesses in these communities that are going solar thanks to Solar Crowdsource are now helping alleviate multiple pollution problems associated with fossil-fuel power plants.

### THE WATER BODY:

Georgia's electricity grid is powered by a diverse array of sources including nuclear, coal, natural gas, hydro, wind and solar. But, when it comes to Georgia's water, coal-fired power plants have the biggest impact, requiring massive amounts of water from our rivers and generating millions of pounds of toxic coal ash waste that poses a threat to both surface and groundwater supplies. The ash stored in massive ponds or landfills at power plants can contaminate groundwater, while also posing failure risks that could send millions of pounds of toxins into our rivers—as has occurred in Tennessee and North Carolina recently. Georgia Power Co. is now closing 29 ash ponds at 11 power plants across the state. While these closures will reduce the threat of coal ash impacting our drinking water and recreational waters, continued reliance on coal and other fossil fuels poses risks to numerous Georgia rivers including the Etowah, Coosa, Chattahoochee, Ocmulgee, Flint and Savannah.





## THE CLEAN:

Solar electricity is an easy sell to environmentally-concerned homeowners. A residential solar system reduces power bills and pollution, but the high upfront cost and lack of financing options is often an impediment for families on a budget.

That's where Solar Crowdsourcing is making a difference. The company is making solar power affordable for more families by organizing targeted solar installation campaigns.

By organizing homeowners to purchase systems in bulk, Solar Crowdsourcing secures lower prices for both the solar panels and installations. Depending on the number of homeowners and businesses who join the campaign, participants can realize savings of up to 25 percent. With federal tax credits, systems for single-family homes can cost less than \$9000 and result in savings on power bills of up to \$25,000 over the 25-year lifespan of the solar panels.

Since 2015, about 50 percent of residential solar installations in Georgia have been facilitated by Solar Crowdsourcing through campaigns in Clarke County and DeKalb County. More than 200 homes and businesses in these communities have installed solar systems, increasing residential solar capacity in Athens-Clarke County by 300 percent and in DeKalb by 500 percent.

Collectively, these Solar Crowdsourcing projects have added 1290 kilowatts of power to the grid. Over the projected 25-year lifespan of the solar panels, the clean energy produced at these sites will help avoid 31,500 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. In one Decatur neighborhood, the program was so successful that Mayor Patti Garrett proclaimed Third Avenue "Solar Avenue" to commemorate Earth Day earlier this year.

Beginning in September, Solar Crowdsourcing is starting a Solarize Dunwoody and early next year will kick off Solarize Atlanta. During these campaigns, interested homeowners and businesses receive free evaluations. Approved sites wishing to purchase systems then sign up; cost savings depend on how many participate.

While at the federal level, current policies are trending toward greater reliance on polluting fossil fuels, in Georgia Solar Crowdsourcing and others are promoting solar power as Georgia's top homegrown energy source.

"Georgia has no homegrown petroleum, coal or natural gas," said Don Moreland, Solar Crowdsourcing CEO and chairman of the Georgia Solar Energy Association. "While we import all our petroleum, coal and natural gas, we export about \$30 billion per year to pay for it. Imagine for a moment if that \$30 billion was invested locally. How quickly could Georgia transform from being almost completely dependent on foreign fuel sources that pollute our air to a domestically secure, sustainable and renewable energy future."



*Top: Solar systems like the ones Solar Crowdsourcing is facilitating have the potential to save individual homeowners up to \$25,000 in power bills over the 25-year lifespan of the solar panels. Above: By bringing down the costs of purchasing and installing solar systems through community-based "solarization" programs, Solar Crowdsourcing has facilitated the installation of more than 200 solar-powered systems since 2015.*



### For More Information Contact:

Don Moreland, CEO Solar Crowdsourcing, 770-548-2714, [don@solarcrowdsourcing.com](mailto:don@solarcrowdsourcing.com)  
Jennette Gayer, Environment Georgia, 404-370-1764, [jennette@environmentgeorgia.org](mailto:jennette@environmentgeorgia.org)