

SOLAR

## EDP Renewables Developing Solar Park to Combat Environmental Injustices

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- EDP Renewables, Volt Energy Utility, and Microsoft are partnering together to develop Hickory Solar Park near Jerseyville, Illinois.
  - The solar park project is thanks to an Environmental Justice Power Purchase Agreement to ensure clean energy access and a strategic use of carbon offsets.

- The Hickory Solar Park and other such projects are meant to address environmental injustices in rural and urban communities.

A new solar park near Jerseyville, Illinois, is under development thanks to a partnership between EDP Renewables and Volt Energy Utility. It's also part of a larger collaboration with Microsoft, which has agreed to purchase electricity and renewable energy credits from the project for 15 years. All together, this new Hickory Solar Park is part of a larger effort to bring clean energy to communities in rural and urban areas that have been disproportionately impacted by [environmental injustices](#).

## **A Power Purchase Agreement Based on Environmental Justice**



Image care of [Asia Chang on Unsplash](#)

The upcoming Hickory Solar Park uses an Environmental Justice PPA (EJPPA) between Microsoft and Volt Energy Utility, which is a Black-owned renewable energy developer. As Microsoft buys electricity and credits from the project, Hickory Solar Park will then pay funding forward to the [Sharing the Power Foundation](#), which advances clean energy through grants and investing in career development programs for students from underrepresented groups.

With the EJPPA, companies like Microsoft can fulfill their carbon-neutrality pledges by purchasing and retiring carbon offsets in proportion with any emissions generated by their upstream material components or on-site operations.

EDP Renewables also seeks to have women and minority-owned businesses in prominent leadership roles when it comes to the construction and project management of the Hickory Solar Park. It's all part of the company's organization-wide push for leveraging corporate emissions goals to advance community impact, from creating [better access to clean energy in lower-income areas](#) to expanding what community leaders can look like and what backgrounds they come from.

“Aligning efforts with partners who share our passion for implementing equitable strategies contributing to local community growth is front and center of importance to us,” said Sandhya Ganapathy, CEO of EDP Renewables.

“Together with Microsoft and Volt, we have the opportunity to prioritize people first by creating jobs and opening doors to women and minority-owned businesses who need to be involved in driving a just clean energy future.”

“We are excited to continue our work with Microsoft and partner with [EDP Renewables] for the first time to address environmental injustice, invest in clean

energy infrastructure, and facilitate clean energy and sustainability business pathways for minority-owned entrepreneurs and small businesses, as well as students looking to start a career,” said Gilbert Campbell, founder and CEO of Volt Energy Utility and the Foundation Board Chair for Sharing the Power Foundation.

## The Importance of Environmental Justice

Clean energy and clean transportation are great causes to pursue, but they need to be accessible to everyone — not just people in Silicon Valley or other major cities that can more easily afford expanding their infrastructure. Thanks to grants from organizations like Sharing the Power Foundation, poorer cities and rural areas could see more opportunities for solar power or EV charging stations, expanding the audience for [mass EV adoption](#).

People also have the right to clean air, especially in their own hometowns. Pursuing clean energy also means less reliance on polluting energy sources, which tend to be located in areas where [only people of color and the poor can afford to live](#). If we transition to cleaner energy sources, then all of those people can have healthier outcomes and brighter futures.

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**SOURCE | IMAGES:** EDP RENEWABLES NORTH AMERICA

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