
City of New Bedford Launches Groundbreaking Solar Power Initiative

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On October 21, City of New Bedford Mayor Scott W. Lang, along with state and local officials, launched the city's precedent-setting solar initiative.

Under the initiative, the City will host up to 10 megawatts (MW) of solar energy generation projects, which will help the City reduce its overall spending on electricity. In total, these projects will produce the same amount of electricity that is used by approximately 1,200 homes.

New Bedford, in partnership with ConEdison *Solutions* and BlueWave Capital, will soon install American-made solar panels on as many as 20 city-owned sites, including schools, municipal buildings and vacant land parcels. The projects are expected to be operational by 2013, and will include both rooftop- and ground-based units. WilmerHale represented the City and negotiated the power purchase and other agreements that are necessary to implement the projects.

The City's two private sector partners are Boston-based BlueWave Capital, LLC and ConEdison *Solutions* of Valhalla, New York. These companies, and their engineering and community partners, were selected by the City to develop up to 10 MW of solar photovoltaic projects on City-owned properties. BlueWave will also partner with the City in an effort to bring

third-party financed solar energy to New Bedford businesses and homeowners, and otherwise maximize the benefits throughout the City by creating local job and apprenticeship opportunities, re-using brownfields and other surplus land, and establishing educational programs in New Bedford schools. ConEdison *Solutions*—which will own the installations on city sites and enter into a long-term power purchase agreement with the city—will be responsible for the installation and ongoing operations and maintenance of the panels and will finance the projects. To help boost area employment, Mayor Lang said ConEdison *Solutions* has agreed to maximize its use of local construction contractors for the project.

The WilmerHale team was led by Boston-based Partner [Mark Kalpin](#)—co-chair of the firm’s [Energy and Cleantech Group](#). The team continues to represent the City as the initiative progresses.

“This comprehensive development program is the first of its kind in a Massachusetts municipality,” said Kalpin. “It is an innovative and complex initiative, and we are proud to be a part of the City’s pioneering efforts concerning renewable energy.”

WilmerHale’s Cleantech and Energy Group is familiar with the legal issues involved in these types of matters. Earlier this month, the US Department of Energy finalized a [\\$150 million loan guarantee to firm client 1366 Technologies, Inc.](#) for the development of a multicrystalline wafer manufacturing project that could significantly drive down the costs of solar manufacturing. In June, the firm secured \$75 million in critical equipment financing for a regional solar project development company.