

New solar energy plan will broaden its appeal, affordability, professor says

July 8 2015, by George Diepenbrock

An Obama administration plan to help lower- and middle-income Americans gain access to solar energy would help introduce the renewable energy source to a segment of the population that typically can't afford installation costs or has little incentive to do so, a University of Kansas researcher said.

Rachel Krause, assistant professor in the School of Public Affairs & Administration, said while a \$500 million investment in solar power is no small thing, the initiative is most significant for targeting low-income homeowners and renters.

"These populations typically are often not able to take advantage of renewable energy technologies. Although solar power reduces monthly electricity bills and may end up saving money in the long term, it requires a large upfront investment," Krause said. "This front-end investment is something that lower-income people often cannot do and renters often do not have any incentive to do."

Krause, who teaches policy analysis, public policy and urban administration and a class on sustainability communities, has published research on how a city's form of government can influence sustainability initiatives and effectiveness of EPA labels on hybrid and electric cars.

"This initiative has the potential to increase the familiarity and accessibility of solar power to a broader swath of the population," Krause said, "which will yield short-term environmental justice

improvements as well as contribute to an overall transition to a low-carbon energy system."

Provided by University of Kansas

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