



**BLACK BEAR**  
ENERGY  
A LEGENCE Company



# Get to Know the Driver Team

## *Client Operations Team*

*Oct 28, 2024: The Client Operations Team, also known as the Driver Team at Black Bear Energy, guides clients through the solar installation process, from identifying viable assets to energization. The team is led by Victoria Stulgis and includes Jen Lessick, Eliana Mallory, Emma Hinkson, Zoe Racette, and Pauline Hanset. Read on to learn more about the Driver Team and their work at Black Bear Energy.*

### **Tell us about the Driver Team. What do they do? What's a typical day like in the Driver Team world?**

The Driver Team leads the charge to get more solar panels on commercial and industrial real estate. We work with clients to identify the best real estate assets for solar and then run the RFP process. Together, the drivers manage over 100 clients through all stages of the solar construction process.

## **How do you recommend staying current with industry developments and policy changes?**

Black Bear sits at the intersection of institutional real estate and renewables. Our vantage point and volume gives us a unique perspective on the market. We supplement that proprietary view with research including; newsletters, articles, and podcasts. Some of our frequented platforms include Canary Media, Solar Wakeup, and Volts. We also rely on our network of stakeholders and channel partners who in many cases have a pulse on a new market before anything is published.

## **What emerging trends in the energy sector are you most excited about?**

We are looking forward to seeing more incentives and solar friendly programs that will open up new markets, including:

- Solar programs that integrate battery storage with a focus on resiliency. At a time when we're experiencing an increase in the frequency of climate events, the intersection of solar, grid optimization, and resiliency is especially promising.
- Additional incentives for affordable housing. A great example of this is the SOMAH program in California.
- More community solar legislation is being passed across the country, even in states that have been historically unfriendly to solar and renewables. There is so much momentum behind the industry, and states and jurisdictions across the political spectrum are seeing the benefit of bringing renewable energy jobs and economic value to their areas.

## **What do you value most about being part of the Driver team at Black Bear? Can you share an example of teamwork that made a difference in a project?**

It is incredibly inspiring working with a team of highly motivated, creative, and thoughtful women. We feel very fortunate to work alongside such exceptional people. The Driver team collaborates on everything from best practices for client management to discovering new project structures and emerging markets. Each project is a testament to the broader Black Bear team's extraordinary ability to communicate effectively, work efficiently, and adapt to an ever-changing industry.

**Who has been a significant mentor or influence in your career, and what lessons have you learned from them that you apply in your work today?**

We all look up to Black Bear's President and Founder, Drew Torbin, who works harder than anyone we know, and for nearly two decades, has been relentless in doing everything in his power to get hundreds of MWs of solar installed on real estate assets.

One of Drew's mottos is "Time kills all deals". This resonates in the solar industry, where every week at Black Bear can seem like a lesson in how a solar deal can die, but empowers each member of the driver team to help clients get solar deployed more quickly and with more certainty.

**How do you measure the impact of your work in the energy sector? Can you share an example where you saw tangible results from your efforts?**

The best thing about Black Bear is that our impact is so clear and measurable: the solar panels installed on the roofs, or parking lots and garages of our clients. There is no substitute for going to see the solar projects that we helped get built in person. Knowing that we helped to build something that will supply clean energy, whether that is to low and moderate income households, large energy users, or the grid at large, is impactful work that we will never tire of seeing.