

## ***Case Study: Tioga Energy***

### ***Challenge – Financing distributed commercial solar projects***

Tioga Energy was an early leader in the distributed commercial solar market sector. Tioga owned and operated more than 100 solar projects, helping its customers to reduce energy costs and hedge against electricity rate volatility while lowering carbon emissions. The projects ranged from 100kW to over 1 megawatt in scale and serve public and private schools, towns, private companies, and other entities across the United States. Tioga pioneered the aggregation of multiple projects for related entities using standardized project documentation so as to speed financing, construction, and operation.

To accelerate growth, Tioga management in 2011 elected to finance its new projects via aggregation financing arrangements. Such financings work best for projects with standardized off-takers, contracts, and other project criteria to streamline the due diligence and closing process. Multiple one-off projects remained that did not fit the new template financing criteria, including solar for churches, convention centers, large retailers, corporate office buildings, and public schools. Tioga wanted to secure and close financing for these projects, yet lacked the financing team bandwidth. Seeking recognized renewable power project financing expertise, Tioga called upon Birch Tree Capital.

### ***Approach***

Birch Tree Capital applied its solar financing experience to find, negotiate, and close financing for several individual solar projects in multiple states. Birch Tree Capital's principal, John Harper, served as Tioga's interim managing director of finance. He led Tioga's financing teams for the projects. The diversity and concurrent timing of the projects mandated close coordination between Birch Tree Capital, Tioga staff and advisors, and Tioga's financing partners. Birch Tree Capital also assisted Tioga in structuring aggregation financing programs.

### ***Solution***

With help from Birch Tree Capital, Tioga Energy met its commitments to multiple customers, even while establishing productive relationships with new financing partners. These relationships facilitated Tioga's development and installation of still more solar projects going forward. By assuming the lead financing responsibilities for the legacy projects, Birch Tree Capital enabled senior Tioga management to focus on other priority growth initiatives. sPower acquired Tioga's portfolio and operations in 2013.