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Climate Minister Pushes Ahead With 700 Sunlight Income Villages This Year, Holds Implementation Forum

- Focused review of field-level challenges, including financing, grid connection, and permitting procedures

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sungwhan) will hold a Sunlight Income Village forum at the Han River Flood Control Office (located in Seocho-gu, Seoul) on the morning of May 7 to discuss challenges in project implementation, tailored support, and follow-up management measures.

The forum, chaired by Minister Kim Sungwhan, will bring together the Sunlight Income Village Task Force, energy-related organizations, ReSCO* companies, experts, industry representatives, and financial institutions to share a wide range of field-centered perspectives.

* Renewable Energy Service Company (ReSCO): A renewable energy integrated service company selected and registered by the Korea Energy Agency based on a demonstrated level of construction capability and project performance.

Sunlight Income Villages are a model case of resident-led energy self-governance in which local residents form cooperatives to directly pursue solar power generation projects and return the profits to the community and residents.

The government aims to establish more than 700 villages this year and is pursuing the initiative as a key policy to simultaneously expand renewable energy and revitalize local economies.

The forum will focus on key challenges encountered during project implementation, including financial support, grid connection, site acquisition, and permitting procedures.

Based on the outcome of the forum, the MCEE plans to address delays in administrative procedures that project operators have identified for improvement under the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), including facility confirmation (Korea Energy Agency), technical review (Korea Electric Power Corporation), and pre-use inspection (Korea Electrical Safety Corporation), by pursuing institutional improvements and staffing reinforcements to ensure timely processing within the prescribed deadlines.

In addition, to facilitate smooth project implementation, the government plans to support the entire process, from cooperative establishment to facility operation, through joint public-private field support teams and ReSCO providers, while also strengthening full-cycle oversight after project completion, including monitoring whether profit distribution is carried out transparently, in order to enhance policy credibility.

Minister Kim Sungwhan stated, “Sunlight Income Villages are the most practical model of the energy transition, where residents participate and share in the benefits. We will establish more than 700 villages this year without disruption and lay the groundwork early for nationwide expansion.”

He added, “We will closely examine issues raised in the field and continue to strengthen institutional support in areas such as financing, grid connection, and permitting. At the same time, we will further reinforce the management system covering the entire process, from project planning to operation, to ensure that projects are implemented more transparently and stably.”