



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## *Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 20, 2020

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## **Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Hosts SolSmart Program to help Communities Be Solar Ready**

**RICHMOND-** The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) now offers a solar technical assistance program to local governments to hasten and increase solar developments across Virginia. SolSmart is a national program led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office funds the program. The goal is to recognize and remove barriers to solar development.

“Solar development is key in meeting Virginia's clean energy goals established in the Virginia Clean Economy Act,” said **DMME Director John Warren**. “DMME has expertise and is well positioned to serve our friends on the local level as we all work toward the transition to a clean energy grid. We are excited about our collaboration with the University of Virginia in developing and launching this program. Their technical advice will provide critical guidance and input needed to engage stakeholders and ensure program success.”

The Virginia Clean Economy Act requires electricity be generated in Virginia using carbon-free sources by 2050 increasing the demand for renewable energy.

The agency will work with the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service which will provide technical expertise as the two help localities across the Commonwealth become solar ready.

“With the passage of the Clean Economy Act, Virginia has moved into a leadership position in efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate emissions that are contributing to global warming,” said **William Shobe, Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Studies at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia**. “Our work with DMME and the Solar Foundation will help chart a fair and cost-effective path to a clean energy future.”

DMME will begin its work with local governments this summer. With the guidance and resources of the national SolSmart program, no-cost technical assistance and examples from currently designated solar ready communities will assist localities with best practices for permitting, zoning, inspections, code needs, utility involvement and community involvement. Receiving a SolSmart designation sends a positive signal to solar developers who want to do business in the community and create new jobs.

“We are excited to work with UVA and the DMME to help more Virginia communities meet their clean energy goals through SolSmart,” said **Andrea Luecke, President and Executive Director at The Solar Foundation**. “Even in the wake of new challenges created by COVID-19, local governments are looking to clean energy to renew their economies and create high-quality jobs in the years ahead. With Virginia now poised to be one of the leading markets for solar energy growth, these expert Advisors will be helping communities succeed.”

DMME’s Carrie Hearne and UVA’s Elizabeth Marshall will serve as [SolSmart Advisors](#) for Virginia.

Localities wishing to participate can find more information on the DMME [website](#) or call (804) 692-3200. Communities that participate in the no-cost program are eligible for a [SolSmart designation](#).

**About SolSmart:**

[SolSmart](#) is a national program that has helped over 350 local governments make it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar. The program is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office.

**About the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service**

The University of Virginia’s [Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#) serves communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond by combining decades of knowledge about government, communities, and the people of Virginia with contemporary and advanced research, analytical expertise, and focused training for high performance.

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