



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Energy

Washington Building / 8th Floor

1100 Bank Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219-3638

(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237

www.energy.virginia.gov

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Tarah Kesterson

(276) 356-3405

tarah.kesterson@energy.virginia.gov

Abingdon Receives SolSmart Bronze Designation for Solar Energy Readiness

Abingdon, Va. – Abingdon is the latest to join the ranks of [SolSmart](#) designated Communities. The town received a Bronze designation noting that it is “solar ready”, creating a clear path for businesses and residents to go solar. The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) partners with the University of Virginia’s (UVA) Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service to serve as a no-cost technical partner for SolSmart.

“Clean energy development is an important business recruiting tool for any community and the leaders of Abingdon saw that opportunity when working toward this SolSmart designation,” **said Virginia Energy Deputy Director Will Clear.** “By removing barriers for solar development we expect the town to celebrate economic successes.”

To receive the Bronze designation, Abingdon’s internal processes such as permitting zoning and inspection standards had to undergo a review. SolSmart designated localities remove barriers that could increase costs and time for those wanting to install solar.

“Increasing access to solar energy is an important initiative for Abingdon. We want to support sustainability and help our residents and businesses think green. The Sustain Abingdon committee helped clear obstacles by reviewing the zoning ordinance and creating a website for solar energy options,” **said Sustainability Chair Elizabeth Gardner,** owner of Full Bloom Farm House in Abingdon. “We are honored to earn the Bronze SolSmart certification and hope this helps support the sustainability of our local community and economy.”

“Abingdon set the bar for communication and transparency,” **said Elizabeth Marshall,** senior coordinator of the Virginia Solar Initiative at the Weldon Cooper Center. “Their website is an excellent model for other communities across the state that are interested in

encouraging solar, and their ordinance updates and solar permitting guidance show that their process is predictable and community-minded.”

Statewide, over 30 localities and regional commissions have achieved SolSmart designation; nationwide over 470 localities have been designated.

SolSmart-designated localities expand affordable access to clean energy by reducing permitting and installation costs that get passed on to the consumer. In turn, these efforts contribute to expanding local solar markets and creating local jobs.

Virginia communities interested in the SolSmart designation can find more information via the Virginia Energy [website](#). All municipalities, counties and regional organizations are eligible to join the SolSmart program.