



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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PlanRVA Receives SolSmart Bronze Designation

Richmond, Va. – A regional planning organization is ready for new solar business. PlanRVA achieved SolSmart Bronze designation in recognition of their efforts to make solar training and planning resources more accessible to the localities in their region.

As a SolSmart Bronze designee, PlanRVA adopted nationally recognized best practices to advance solar market growth. The organization worked with SolSmart's no-cost technical assistance team to increase local knowledge of solar energy that will benefit the region.

SolSmart is led by the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) and the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service serve as the lead technical partners across Virginia. Statewide, 30 localities and regional commissions have achieved SolSmart designation; nationwide over 508 localities have been designated since the program launched in 2016.

“Solar is a key piece of the all of the above energy approach in Virginia,” **said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis.** “Taking advantage of the SolSmart program will put Richmond and the surrounding area at an advantage to increase clean energy generation.”

“The Bronze designation is a market signal that our region is ready for the clean energy transition and that we are a good place to do business,” **said PlanRVA Resilience Planner Nicole Keller.** “At the same time, we are working to equip our localities with the information and tools they need to determine for themselves what that looks like in their own communities. We are responding to the needs of our localities by offering tailored trainings and support. We

want to encourage the green energy transition in our region, but make sure that it happens in a just way.”

To receive this designation, PlanRVA developed and posted a solar resource landing page to their website; developed a regional solar suitability siting and mapping tool to help developers and localities plan for the most appropriate locations of ground-mounted solar installations; and hosted in-person solar training workshop for local government staff and officials in their region.

“As the energy transition advances across Virginia, regional planning organizations like PlanRVA can play a critical role in supporting localities and delivering resources,” **said Elizabeth Marshall, Virginia SolSmart partner and Senior Program Manager of the Virginia Solar Initiative at the Weldon Cooper Center.** “We applaud PlanRVA’s leadership in and commitment to promoting solar best practices.”

Regional organizations and local governments achieve SolSmart designation by meeting established criteria that are based on national best practices for building solar-friendly communities. The SolSmart team of experts offers no-cost technical assistance and resources to help regional organizations and communities put these practices into action. Those that meet the criteria are designated SolSmart Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze.

Virginia communities interested in SolSmart designation can find more information on the Virginia Energy [website](#). All municipalities, counties and regional organizations are eligible to join the SolSmart program at no cost.