December 18, 2013

Dear members and communities across North Carolina,

North Carolina is quickly moving up the ranks of states leading in solar energy. By the end of the year we are expected to have more solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity installed in NC than in 45 or 46 other states. The majority of this rapid growth is occurring in utility-scale ground mounted PV systems covering 5 to over 100 acres per system; however, installations on residential and commercial rooftops are also increasing. The recent sprouting of these solar farms means that many communities across our state are being asked to address solar-related land use permitting issues for the first time.

To address this challenge, the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association and the North Carolina Solar Center initiated a project to engage stakeholders in the creation of a template solar development ordinance intended for local governments to adapt to their particular needs. Today the final product is available.

A broad range of stakeholders were involved in an open consensus drafting process--including local planners, state and federal agencies, power companies, agriculture, and environmental groups. The template is based on existing NC solar ordinances and leading national model solar ordinances and is intended as a balanced approach to solar development with sufficient flexibility for communities to tailor it to their local needs. In addition to the ordinance itself, there are numerous appendices with valuable information and resources on solar energy for local governments in North Carolina.

We encourage you to review these materials and hope that they will serve as a useful starting point for those communities that wish to create or update a local solar development ordinance.

Sincerely,

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