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New Report Reveals High Satisfaction among Renewable Energy System Owners

Findings suggest the importance of policy as a driver of renewable energy adoption

CHAPEL HILL – A new [report](#) produced by the NC Sustainable Energy Association and the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School's Center for Sustainable Enterprise sheds light on the most significant financial, personal and policy factors driving growth in the purchase of solar photovoltaic (PV) and geothermal systems in North Carolina. The two organizations conducted a survey of solar PV and geothermal system owners in the state to assess the motivations behind their decision to install a system in their home or business and the challenges faced in the process.

Respondents cited the availability of tax credits, concern over the cost of electricity and a desire to “do the right thing” as some of their most important motivations for installing their clean energy systems. The significance of tax credits and the high average household incomes of system owners suggest that legal limitations on retail financing options may be hindering less affluent North Carolina households from being able to access the solar PV market due to the financial barrier posed by upfront capital costs.

“The report clearly validates the benefits of clean energy systems,” remarked NCSEA Executive Director Ivan Urlaub. “But beyond pointing out the high satisfaction and cost savings enjoyed by renewable energy system owners, it also suggests through its findings that policy can play an important role in further allowing the market to make these systems more financially accessible to middle and lower income consumers.”

Researchers surveyed over 1,300 solar PV owners and over 1,000 geothermal system owners to develop their insights. Survey results revealed that solar PV system owners were more likely than geothermal system owners to have already engaged in energy-saving behaviors before installing their system. The data suggest that the moment of installation of a renewable energy system and immediately thereafter are critical windows to increase utilization of other energy efficient technologies. Applying this finding could pave the way for greater reduction of energy consumption and help companies to capitalize on growth opportunities in the energy efficiency market.

“The UNC Kenan-Flagler Center for Sustainable Enterprise is excited to partner with NCSEA on this report,” said Carol Hee, Director of the Center for Sustainable Enterprise. “It highlights our state's success with the rapid growth of solar PV and geothermal energy systems and also points out areas for improvement to ensure that more homeowners and small business owners can save money with these technologies.”

About the NC Sustainable Energy Association:

Founded in 1978, the NC Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization of individuals, businesses, government and non-profits working to ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in North Carolina through education, public policy and economic development. Learn more at www.energync.org

About the UNC Kenan-Flagler Center for Sustainable Enterprise:

For well over a decade, the Center for Sustainable Enterprise has been the hub of sustainability at UNC Kenan-Flagler, creating leaders who use business to innovate for global change. It provides students, executives and organizations with the education, experiential learning and career development resources necessary to become innovative leaders in sustainable enterprise.

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