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Industry Experts, Local Officials Conclude Input on Guidance for Solar Projects

Final Working Group meeting clears the path for production of a template solar ordinance

RALEIGH – The NC Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) and the NC Solar Center today hosted a final working group meeting on October 28, 2013 that was part of a months-long process to guide the creation of a template ordinance for solar energy projects. The template ordinance addresses some of the most common considerations that arise in the permitting of solar energy facilities. It is intended to offer a path that could facilitate solar project development for companies and landowners while simultaneously creating a framework for local governments to ensure the safeguarding of local values and interests.

At the final working group meeting solar industry representatives, legal experts, developers, local and state government officials and other stakeholders sought ways to address and incorporate the latest comments received on the template ordinance draft. Some of those comments came out of the fifth and final regional public forum that NCSEA and the Solar Center held in Charlotte, NC on October 18, 2013 to spur discussion on the topic and solicit feedback on the current draft. Through the public forums and the working group sessions, NCSEA and the Solar Center encouraged participants to identify and put forward information on solar project permitting and development that can serve as useful guidance for parties dealing with these issues, but they stopped short of proposing that the resulting template ordinance be taken as a prescriptive approach.

“The template is solely a guideline for local governments that wish to design a solar ordinance and need a model that is uniquely relevant to the state,” said Michael Fucci, Regulatory and Market Analyst for NCSEA. “The industry is assisted because companies could rely on the template in jurisdictions where a lack of understanding of how to regulate solar development could otherwise create a significant barrier to entry.

“Even before the draft template has been completed we have already seen demand for it from cities and counties developing their own solar ordinances,” noted Tommy Cleveland, Renewable Energy Project Coordinator for the NC Solar Center. “This is an early indication of the demand for a model ordinance. We hope and expect that there will be significant use of this first-of-its kind template in NC, and perhaps also in surrounding states, once the final version is published.”

The final version is expected to be published before the end of the year.

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 North Carolina Solar Center:

The North Carolina Solar Center, as part of the College of Engineering at North Carolina State University advances a sustainable energy economy by educating, demonstrating and providing support for clean energy technologies, practices, and policies. It serves as a resource for innovative, green energy

technologies through technology demonstration, technical assistance, outreach and training. For more information visit: <http://www.ncsc.ncsu.edu>. Twitter: @NCSolarCenter