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## **Local Experts, Stakeholders Explore Common Ground on Solar Energy Projects**

*Public forum launches effort to develop the Southeast's first-of-its-kind template ordinance*

RALEIGH – The NC Sustainable Energy Association and the NC Solar Center kicked off the first of a five-part series of public events designed to culminate in the creation of a template ordinance for solar energy projects. The eventual product will be the Southeast's first-of-its-kind guide for harmonizing the elements included in the permitting of solar energy facilities, offering a path that could facilitate solar project development for companies and landowners while simultaneously creating a framework for the inclusion of local values and interests. State and local officials, local landowners, legal experts, and clean energy business representatives shared views and offered insights during the three hour event at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science's Nature Research Center on Friday, May 31, 2013.

"The Solar Development and Siting forums bring together a wide cross section of stakeholders to discuss the issues and challenges facing solar projects, with the goal of developing a template solar ordinance for North Carolina that can be adapted and adopted by counties and municipalities across the state", said Tommy Cleveland, Solar Engineer with the N.C. Solar Center.

North Carolina has experienced dynamic growth in solar photovoltaic system development; much of it in rural areas of North Carolina where jobs have been created and tax bases have grown. Still, there is limited education for the general public, land owners, and local governments on facilitating this type of development in a way that harmonizes with local needs. This initial public forum garnered input from stakeholders representing a wide array of sectors, including citizens who were interested in the issues.

"This forum demonstrated the tremendous interest that is out there on the technical, social, and environmental aspects of solar projects," said Miriam Makhyoun, Manager of Market Intelligence for the NC Sustainable Energy Association. "The knowledge being shared at this event and the others to come can serve as a blueprint to make sure everyone wins in the communities where solar energy projects are located."

Subsequent meetings are planned for Greensboro (June 27), Lumberton (July 16), and Asheville (August 8), with a final forum to be held in Charlotte in late October. Each event is expected to build upon progress from the preceding ones to further inform and improve the draft template ordinance.

### ***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](http://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*