

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW!

SUPPORT SOLAR INITIATIVES IN RICHMOND

Solar and other renewable energy sources have been given the short shrift in Richmond for years. Virginia has a total of 15 megawatts (MW) of solar installed; Maryland has 187 MW and North Carolina has over 800MW. This year, we need to make a difference in the Legislature and support more solar power for all.

Solar power is a proven and effective way that we can help protect our earth, create jobs and support a green industry, use less water, have zero carbon pollution, reduce the need for more large power plants, replace the declining supplies of coal, and provide some alternative to the grid system.

Our target for this campaign is to have the entire legislature support four main initiatives: a mandatory requirement for power from renewable sources; allow community net metering; protecting our coasts; and approve and fund the renewable energy grant (and target it to non-profits).

- The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requires a utility to generate a percentage of its power from renewable sources – hydro, wind, solar, and others. In most states, the RPS increases each year and is mandatory, or the utility pays a penalty. Virginia's RPS is voluntary, so there is no impetus for the utilities to use renewables, and so they mostly don't. The proposed Solar Development Authority would create this requirement.
- Community Net Metering allows groups of people to band together and install a solar "farm" when they cannot have solar on their houses due to trees, orientation, or other reasons. The utility then pays the owners for the power produced through its billing system.
- The renewable energy grant program was approved last year, but must be passed again this year. The program's goals are to fund up to 35% of midsized solar systems, with a total fund of \$10 million. The grants should be directed to nonprofits and churches, as solar is out of reach for them even with creative financing. A "dollar a watt" grant will allow many churches to live their faith in caring for the earth.
- The Coastal Protection Act will set a fee for producing carbon pollution, and target the revenue to protecting communities from rising sea levels. This is a regional pact, which includes most of the northeastern states, as they have recognized that air pollution is a regional problem.

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<p>To your delegate in Richmond:</p> <p>The Honorable _____ P.O. Box 406 Richmond, Va 23218 Dear (Mr., Ms., Mrs.) _____ -</p>	<p>To your Senator in Richmond:</p> <p>The Honorable _____ Senate of Virginia P.O. Box 396 Richmond, Va 23218 Dear Senator _____</p>
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SUGGESTED PARAGRAPHS:

- 1) I am writing to you as a person of faith who loves our planet, and a member of (Congregation). I believe that solar energy is an important step in protecting our environment, providing much needed jobs, and creating a livable future for our children. I ask that you support the solar initiatives in this legislative session, including the solar development authority, community net metering, the Coastal Protection act, and renewable energy grants for non-profits.
- 2) My faith teaches that our earth is the result of God's hand, and we must do our best to protect and nurture it. Increasing carbon pollution is harming our planet and our health, and it is time to change our energy supply. Solar power creates no pollution and uses no water, an increasingly scarce resource. Solar also creates good jobs – over 3,000 in Maryland in the last two years. I am urging you to support the solar initiatives in the legislature – the creation of a solar authority, allowing community net metering, protecting our coastal areas, and funding renewable energy grants for non-profits, among others.
- 3) We have the gift from our Creator of free, limitless energy from the sun; we need find ways to harness it. Virginia has the opportunity to be a leader in solar energy development and utilization. The creation of a solar authority will engage the industry and the utilities; allowing community net metering will let our neighbors make use of the sun's power; the Coastal Protection Act will help save some of our vulnerable areas; and the renewable energy grant program can enable hundreds of churches to put their faith into practice by protecting the Earth. Please support these and the other environmental initiatives that hold a promise for a future for our children.

To find the names of your Virginia senator and delegate, go to:

whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov

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