

Russell County Virginia

“The Heart of Southwest Virginia”

Tim Lovelace
District 1

Lou Ann Wallace
District 2

Carl Rhea
District 3

Steve Breeding, Chairman
District 5

David Eaton, Vice-Chairman
District 4

Rebecca Dye
District 6

Mark Mitchell
At-Large

Lonzo Lester
County Administrator

LETTER OF COMMITMENT

WHEREAS, the Russell County Board of Supervisors would like the opportunity to offer our Letter of Commitment in the **SolSmart National Designation Program**, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy through the Solar Powering America by Recognizing Communities (SPARC) initiative, designed to recognize counties that have taken key steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of mature local solar markets;

WHEREAS, the SolSmart program will primarily address “solar soft costs,” or business processes or administrative costs that can increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system — costs which are then passed on to solar customers. While certain County policies and processes (such as permitting, planning, and zoning) are the source of some soft costs, Counties will be in position to reduce soft costs and take action to promote the use of solar locally;

WHEREAS, the Designation Program Administrator will conduct a baseline assessment to determine which criteria the County currently meets based on previous efforts and which actions are still required before designation can be granted;

WHEREAS, SolSmart Program will address the soft costs and other barriers that can deliver a number of valuable benefits for key local communities:

- Reducing soft costs can deliver an **increased return on investment for solar customers**.
- Reducing red tape and more efficient approval processes can result in a **time and money savings for local governments**, representing a more productive use of constrained budgets and limited taxpayer resources.
- **Improving access to information on technical and process requirements** can decrease the volume of questions or requests for information from installers and the number of incomplete permit applications, reducing demands on staff time.
- Improving the processes and policies giving rise to some soft costs can result in **improved business prospects for solar companies**.
- Lowering soft costs encourages more residents to go solar and dramatically **reduces greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Implement a tracking metric system related to the growth in solar PV related to residential, industrial, or County facility installations.

WHEREAS, the County is committed to pursuing SolSmart Program designation and eligible for no-cost technical assistance (“TA”) from the Technical Assistance Provider (led by The Solar Foundation) and its team of national solar and local government experts to help communities meet the criteria for designation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the SolSmart designation program will provide high-profile, national recognition for the County and achieving designation that will signal to solar companies that Russell County is “open for business,” attracting new businesses and helping designees share in the economic development benefits attached to the solar industry;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Russell County Board of Supervisors strongly endorses and supports this Letter of Commitment for the **SolSmart National Designation Program**.

WITNESS my signature and the seal of the Board of Supervisors of Russell County, Virginia, this 5th day of September, 2017.

(SEAL)



RESOLVED this 5th day of September, 2017, by the following vote:

Recorded Vote:

A COPY TEST:

Moved by: Lou Ann Wallace

Seconded by: Carl Rhea

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0


Lonzo Lester, County Administrator