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American Public Power Association

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PRESS RELEASE

“COMMUNITY SOLAR” SURVEY

The Board of Electric Commissioners heard a presentation about a “Community Solar” survey at its February 22, 2018 meeting. The meeting included a presentation from Seamus McNamee, Senior Director for Research at GreatBlue Research, Inc., regarding a survey conducted by GreatBlue of NAED residential customers about “Community Solar”.

A “community solar” project is, per Solar Energy Industries Associates, (SEIA), “when the power is supplied by solar energy...the shared renewables project pool investments from multiple members of a community and provide power and/or financial benefits in return.”

The survey of Three Hundred and twelve (312) residential customers was conducted circa August 2017 and was funded by a Municipal Energy Technical Assistance Grant awarded to NAED by the Commonwealth’s Department of Environmental Resources (DOER).

The survey’s conclusion (with a margin of error of 5.5%) including the following:

- There is limited interest among NAED customers for installing solar facilities on the rooftops of homes. Only 1.6% of those interviewed had installed solar with an additional 17.3% stating that they were considering installing solar arrays or panels in the near future.
- NAED customers indicated that “low rates” and “Quality of Service” were the two most important factors. The survey found that 76.9% of customers stated that they would use solar if it reduced their bills, while 9% would use solar even if it increased their bill.
- Implementation of alternative energy resources was considered to be “very important” or “somewhat important” to 70.9% of those sampled.
- Customers were asked if they would want NAED to offer an option to purchase solar power, even if the cost of that power was at a slightly higher cost. 30.1% of those sampled supported the idea, while 48.1% did not favor the concept.
- The survey found that nearly half (45.8%) of the respondents stated that they would be willing to pay a higher price for solar energy if the price for the solar energy was “guaranteed” not to increase for twenty (20) years.

The Board of Electric Commissioners will review the survey results and consider the information as the Board considers future NAED projects, customer rates and power portfolio planning.