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Media Contacts

Sarah Wright, Utah Clean Energy Executive Director

sarah@utahcleanenergy.org | Office: 801-363-4046 | Cell: 801- 673-7156

Clean Energy Victory: Utah Clean Energy leads effort to Protect Energy Efficiency Funding

Advocacy group works to shift Megawatts to “NegaWatts”

February 1, 2012 - Nonprofit advocacy group Utah Clean Energy led a successful effort to protect millions of dollars dedicated to energy efficiency – Utah’s cleanest and cheapest energy resource. As a result, the Utah Public Service Commission approved a settlement agreement that preserves a strong level of funding for Rocky Mountain Power’s energy efficiency (“demand-side management” or “DSM”) programs.

Settlement negotiations began after Rocky Mountain Power proposed reducing the collection rate for energy efficiency from 3.6% to 2.4% of customers’ monthly bills. Utah Clean Energy, joined by partner organizations, the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET) and Western Resource Advocates (WRA), filed a petition to suspend the proposed reduction in funding for Rocky Mountain Power’s cost-effective DSM programs. Ultimately, Utah Clean Energy and other parties (including SWEET, WRA, Rocky Mountain Power, the Division of Public Utilities, the Office of Consumer Services, and the Utah Association of Energy Users), agreed to set the tariff collection rate to 3.2% of monthly customer bills.

The new demand-side management program collection rate, approved yesterday, keeps utility rates more stable while maintaining and expanding the utility’s successful energy efficiency programs. The 3.2% collection rate will collect \$54.2 million in 2012, which is dedicated to funding cost-effective energy efficiency programs. This level of investment in energy efficiency will result in a projected savings of 250,000 kilowatt hours, which will prevent the emission of 380,000 lbs. of pollution in 2012.

Utility investment in energy efficiency can meet Utah’s growing energy demand the same way as traditional “generation” resources, such as coal, natural gas, wind, and solar because it prevents the utility from having to build costly new power plants. Sarah Wright, Executive Director of Utah Clean Energy explains, “As an energy resource, energy efficiency is a superior option to any other resources available: it is non-polluting, it does not depend on the sun shining or the extraction of fossil fuels, it is cost-effective, and it is readily available for mass distribution. Energy efficiency has enormous untapped potential to reduce carbon emissions, increase our energy independence, and put money back in our wallets, all while helping to meet our energy needs right now.”

The settlement also provides for ongoing discussions between parties with the goal of improving the stakeholder advisory process that is a part of developing new energy efficiency programs. “One of the most promising outcomes of this agreement is the parties’ commitment to additional collaboration toward creating a robust and straightforward process for reviewing and

implementing new energy efficiency programs to power Utah's energy needs in the cleanest and cheapest way available today," says Sophie Hayes, attorney for Utah Clean Energy.

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