Salt Lake City and Utah Clean Energy Unveil “A Bright Future: 10 Year Solar Deployment Plan”

Plan offers fair, implementable solutions for solar customers and utilities

SALT LAKE CITY, Feb. 2, 2017 - At a press conference today at the Utah State Capitol, Utah Clean Energy and Salt Lake City revealed details of a 10-year plan to reduce costs, simplify and expand rooftop solar in the city and state. A Bright Future: 10 Year Solar Deployment Plan offers a suite of readily-available, implementable solutions to position Utah as a leader in the nation’s solar market. The plan was developed as part of the Wasatch Solar Project, and is one of only 15 initiatives in the country to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Market Pathways Initiative.

“Utah’s rooftop solar market has nearly doubled every year for the past 10 years, and the estimated annual economic benefit to Utah’s economy rose to $300 million in 2016,” said Ben Hart, managing director for the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. “Furthermore, according to the Department of Energy’s 2017 U.S. Energy and Employment Report, solar electric generation represents more than 5,894 jobs in Utah. We applaud Salt Lake City and Utah Clean Energy for creating this plan that will help elected officials and regulators develop appropriate policies to support this growing industry.”

In forming the plan, Utah Clean Energy sought input from representatives of solar companies, utilities, local and state government, financiers and community and business organizations. The team then developed solutions that will help the solar industry grow in a manner that is fair for both consumers and utilities.

Salt Lake City’s Sustainability Department Director Vicki Bennett said, “Solar power is a local, inexhaustible, clean energy resource that will draw new investments to Utah and continue to create new jobs and grow our economy. Salt Lake City is committed to expanding rooftop solar. Considering all of the economic and health benefits of solar, we urge our leaders and policy makers to look seriously at how we can implement this plan.”

Recent data from the Utah Department of Energy showed that the solar industry in Utah employs more people than all other electrical power generation segments combined. Solar power has quickly become a critical component of the national power landscape as well: solar accounted for 65 percent of new energy resources in
the U.S. in the first quarter of 2016, and there are now 374,000 Americans employed in the solar industry.

“Because more and more people are adopting clean energy solutions such as rooftop solar, we must now pave the way to capitalize on our amazing solar resource,” said Sarah Wright, Utah Clean Energy Executive Director.

Primary Recommendations from the 10 Year Solar Deployment Plan include:

1. **Ensure all Utahns who want to access solar have affordable choices** – Unfortunately, not everyone who wants solar has a roof that is suitable for solar, or the money to afford the upfront cost of a solar installation.

2. **Cut the red tape for solar permitting** – Local city and county jurisdictions are the gatekeepers to solar energy for residents and businesses. There is immense potential to streamline solar permitting and cut costs. [www.solarsimplified.org](http://www.solarsimplified.org).

3. **Interconnection must keep pace with new technology** – Interconnection requirements outline rules for connecting solar to the grid safely. New technologies have the potential to alleviate concerns about connecting high penetrations of rooftop solar to the grid.

4. **Evolve the Utility Business Model** – It is critical that we plan for the inevitable widespread adoption of customer-deployed resources such as solar. As customers purchase less energy, we must assure reliable and affordable electricity for all customers and fair returns for utilities.

5. **Solar, Storage, and Resiliency** – Solar, combined with storage, can revolutionize the energy industry. By providing opportunities for Utahns to integrate battery storage into the energy mix, Utah can move toward a more resilient energy future.

“With Utah’s solar future at a crossroads, the 10 Year Solar Deployment Plan provides a clear path to overcome challenges and guide the development of a sustainable and robust solar market across Utah,” said Wright. “We look forward to working with utilities and community organizations to find solutions that will leverage investments in rooftop solar and capitalize on Utah’s abundant sunshine and innovation. We see a bright future indeed for solar energy in Utah.”

For a copy of the 10 Year Solar Deployment Plan visit [utahcleanenergy.org](http://utahcleanenergy.org).

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**About Utah Clean Energy**

Utah Clean Energy is Utah’s leading, expert, public interest organization working to expand renewable energy and energy efficiency in a way that is beneficial not only for Utah’s environment and health, but our economy and long-term energy security. Utah Clean Energy is committed to creating a future that ensures healthy, thriving communities for all, empowered and sustained by clean energy.

**About Salt Lake City Sustainability Department**

The Salt Lake City Sustainability Department aims to preserve and improve our built and natural environments and provide residents information on sustainability issues affecting Salt Lake City. The Department of Sustainability develops goals and strategies to protect our natural resources, reduce pollution, slow climate change, and establish a path toward greater resiliency and vitality for all aspects of our community.
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