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Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources Receives National Award for Efforts to Advance Distributed Solar

Rhode Island Program Receives 2016 State Leadership in Clean Energy Award

Providence, RI — The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) has awarded the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) with the 2016 State Leadership in Clean Energy Award for developing a pilot program to explore how distributed solar energy could provide value to Rhode Island’s electric grid and help cities and towns achieve energy savings.

OER’s System Reliability Procurement Solar Distributed Generation pilot project was one of six clean energy programs nationwide to win an award for its outstanding accomplishments. CESA, a nonprofit coalition of public agencies working together to advance clean energy, established these biennial awards to highlight model programs and projects that have accelerated the adoption of clean energy technologies and strengthened clean energy markets. The recipients of the awards were chosen by an independent panel of five distinguished judges, each with years of experience in clean energy.

“Governor Raimondo and OER are committed to enhancing Rhode Island’s status as a national clean energy innovator. Our System Reliability Procurement Solar Distributed Generation Pilot is demonstrating that targeted clean energy solutions can generate tangible cost savings for local residents and statewide utility customers, all while fostering reliability and promoting sustainable infrastructure,” said Rhode Island Energy Commissioner Carol Grant. “We are thankful for the partnership of National Grid, Commerce RI, and SmartPower, who helped make this pilot a success. OER is honored to receive this award from CESA, and we look forward to continuing to lead Rhode Island to a secure, cost-effective, and sustainable energy future.”

The goal of the pilot program – launched in Tiverton and Little Compton – was to better understand the costs and benefits of solar distributed generation and its ability to reduce peak loads on the distribution system. The effects could possibly help defer traditional and more costly utility capital investments, and achieve utility cost savings for cities and towns.

The pilot used a multi-pronged approach to successfully mobilize the local community and solar market, exceeding goals for solar adoption in the pilot area. Preliminary estimates indicate that solar resources enrolled through the pilot could provide enough peak load reduction to defer a new substation feeder—originally estimated to cost \$2.93 million—by two to four years.

“Beyond the immediate savings and increased solar penetration achieved, the project offers a real-world demonstration of the strategic integration of solar deployment with electric distribution planning,” said CESA Executive Director Warren Leon. “The project provides a replicable model that other states can use to strengthen cooperative planning with utilities on distributed generation.”

CESA member organizations from across the United States submitted nominations for the leadership awards. Entries were judged based on public benefits and results, cost-effectiveness, leadership and innovation, and replicability. The judging panel consisted of five energy experts: Todd Foley, American Council on Renewable Energy; Jenny Heeter, National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Brian Keane, SmartPower; Heather Rhoads-Weaver, eFormative Options; and Bill Ritter, Center for the New Energy Economy.

A case study with more information about Rhode Island’s System Reliability Procurement Solar Distributed Generation pilot project is available on CESA’s website at www.cesa.org/projects/state-leadership-in-clean-energy/2016.

CESA will be hosting an upcoming webinar presentation on this project with guest speakers from the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources. This webinar will take place on Wednesday, July 13 from 1-2:30 p.m. ET. For more information on this free webinar and to register, visit www.cesa.org/projects/state-leadership-in-clean-energy/2016.

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About the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources: The Office of Energy Resources (OER) is Rhode Island’s lead state agency on energy policy and programs. The mission of OER is to lead Rhode Island to a secure, cost-effective, and sustainable energy future. OER works closely with private and public stakeholders to increase the reliability and security of our energy supply, reduce energy costs and mitigate price volatility, and improve environmental quality. By developing and implementing smart energy policies—such as those that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy—OER helps advance Rhode Island as a national leader in the new clean energy economy. For more information, visit www.energy.ri.gov/reliability.

About the Clean Energy States Alliance: The Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) is a national nonprofit coalition of public agencies and organizations working together to advance clean energy. CESA members—mostly state agencies—include many of the most innovative, successful, and influential public funders of clean energy initiatives in the country. CESA works with state leaders, federal agencies, industry representatives, and other stakeholders to develop and promote clean energy technologies and markets. CESA facilitates information sharing, provides technical assistance, coordinates multi-state collaborative projects, and communicates the positions and achievements of its members. For more information, visit www.cesa.org.