

## Media Training Guide: Statewide CLEAN Program Talking Points

*This document provides an overview of the most important talking points for a CLEAN Program advocate when addressing the media – including helpful info on how CLEAN Programs work, why they are needed, and a list of CLEAN Program success stories.*

- **Renewable energy, which has been proven to be cost-effective and reliable across the world, can meet America’s energy needs.**
  - The German power system, which incorporates enough rooftop solar to meet half the country's midday energy needs, set a global reliability record in 2011<sup>1</sup> with only 15.31 minutes of downtime.
  - Renewables provide more than 40 percent of Denmark's electrical generation<sup>2</sup>, and their grid is markedly more reliable than in the United States.
  - Falling costs for PV modules has made solar even more cost-effective (the price of PV modules has fallen more than 80% since 2012<sup>3</sup>).
- **A rapidly increasing portion of renewables worldwide are deployed as distributed generation, providing greater energy diversity and security.**
  - Distributed generation (DG) refers to generating energy close to where it is consumed, including rooftops, parking lots and other disturbed lands close to load demand, rather than forcing communities to rely on distant power plants and costly long-distance power transmission.
  - Wholesale Distributed Generation (WDG) refers to DG systems that connect to the local distribution grid and sell the electricity they produce to the local utility. The clean local energy produced by WDG is used to serve local energy demand rather than just on-site load.
- **Wholesale Distributed Generation provides significant benefits to communities**
  - WDG facilities serve local load – avoiding the expensive and inefficient long-distance transmission of energy.
  - WDG projects keep energy dollars close to home – growing local economies, driving business growth, and creating jobs.
  - WDG projects come online quickly – avoiding the lengthy and expensive process of building new, large, centralized power plants and transmission lines.
  - WDG projects democratize access to clean local energy – anyone can participate, not just homeowners.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.renewablesinternational.net/german-grid-reaches-record-reliability-in-2011/150/537/56183/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/24/denmark-renewables-idUSL5E8KO8CV20120924>

<sup>3</sup> <http://cleantechnica.com/2013/05/06/solar-pv-module-prices-have-fallen-80-since-2008-wind-turbines-29/>

- **CLEAN Programs are a proven energy policy to quickly and cost-effectively deploy wholesale distributed generation.**
  - Clean Local Energy Accessible Now (CLEAN) Programs are responsible for deploying the majority of renewable energy worldwide.
  - CLEAN Programs (also known as a feed-in tariff with streamlined interconnection procedures) allow local businesses, residents, and organizations to install local, renewable energy projects – including solar, wind, and biomass facilities – in underutilized spaces such as rooftops, waste water treatment plants, and abandoned lots.
  - CLEAN Programs streamline connecting distributed energy projects to the grid and guarantee that locally-produced energy will be bought by the local utility at a fixed price for a long duration, usually 20 years.
    - a) Standard long-term contracts protect ratepayers from volatile – inevitably rising – costs of fossil fuels.
    - b) With CLEAN Programs in place, financing clean local energy projects becomes much easier, and the whole community benefits.
    - c) Local businesses, residents, and organizations can be energy producers, not just consumers.
- **CLEAN Programs offer numerous benefits to utilities and ratepayers.**
  - CLEAN Programs encourage energy to be produced and used locally, which avoids the expensive and inefficient long-distance transmission of energy from distant power plants.
  - CLEAN Programs allow for the development of wind and solar projects and biomass generation facilities in underutilized spaces.
  - By diversifying energy sources, CLEAN Programs help insulate ratepayers from volatile spikes in the price of fossil fuels.
  - Opening the energy market to small-scale generation also creates economic opportunities as fixed prices create steady revenue streams for renewable energy projects.
- **How is a CLEAN Program different from a net metering program?**
  - Net metering uses a single meter to record both the electricity a family, business, or organization uses, and the excess generation your renewable system sends back to the grid. The energy you generate can cancel out the energy you use, but you make little to no money on any excess generation.
  - CLEAN Programs feature a separate meter to measure power produced. If you are a utility customer, you continue to pay the retail rate for electricity consumed.
  - Participants are paid the wholesale rate for every watt of clean, renewable energy they generate and sell to the local utility.
  - Unlike net metering, applications for CLEAN projects are not limited to utility customers but rather open to all community members.

- **How do CLEAN Programs help states meet Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS)?**
  - By spurring the development of local clean energy, CLEAN Programs quickly and cost-effectively help utilities meet their RPS requirements.

### **CLEAN Program Success Stories:**

- **Gainesville, FL (Est. 2009)**
  - Increased solar photovoltaic capacity by over 5,300%. Over 15 MW of installed solar capacity.
  - Created 300 local jobs.
  - Energy prices have risen by less than 1% — about a dollar per month.
- **Sacramento, CA (Est. 2010)**
  - Brought 100 MWs of local solar online in two years.
  - No impact to ratepayers outside of business-as-usual.
  - The 100 megawatts of local solar in the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) service territory is equivalent to 2.5 gigawatts of local solar if a similar program were extended across California.
- **Vermont (Expanded in 2012)**
  - Vermont has a statewide CLEAN Program — known locally as the Standard Offer program.
  - Through the passage of the 2012 Energy Bill, Vermont expanded the statewide program from 50 megawatts to 127.5 megawatts. 127.5 MW of solar, for example, would serve 2.8% of Vermont’s annual energy usage.
  - Around 28 MWs of clean local energy generation have been built in just three years, with many more projects underway.
- **Germany (Est. 2000)**
  - Germany serves as the best example of a thriving CLEAN Program on the national level.
  - Established in 2000 through the national *Renewable Energy Law*, the initial goal of Germany’s CLEAN Program was to generate 12.5% of the nation’s electricity from renewable sources by 2010. Germany reached this goal in 2007, three years ahead of schedule.
  - On a sunny day in May 2012, Germany produced 50% of the country’s electricity from solar energy — the equivalent of 20 nuclear power stations operating at full capacity.
  - The German CLEAN Program enables German citizens, farmers, and small business owners to easily generate and sell clean local energy to the local utility at a fixed price for a set duration.