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Virginia Energy Receives \$1 Million for Virginia Energy Resilience Program

The Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience (RACER) Program will support communities in building energy resilience

Big Stone Gap, Va. – The Virginia Department of Energy (Virginia Energy) received \$1 million in funding that will establish the Virginia Energy Resilience program. The end goal is to ensure communities have a plan toward improving community energy resilience during major weather events.

“Virginians must have affordable and reliable energy,” **said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis.** “Businesses and families should not have to worry about whether the lights will turn on or if the heat will work during a major winter storm. This project is a great step toward easing those fears and ensuring resiliency.”

The first step will offer planning assistance to 35 communities identified as historically disadvantaged. Virginia Energy and project partners will study grid data and demographics and recruit to assist interested communities in developing the energy resilience plans.

The second phase of the project will identify 10 communities to assist in developing shovel-ready designs for solar and battery storage installations. These sites can serve as emergency shelters in the event of power outages.

Partners on the project include James Madison University's Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Energy, The Clean Energy States Alliance, Resilient Virginia, The Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia and Virginia Clean Cities.

"The U.S. Department of Energy has been instrumental in advancing the development of cleaner and more reliable energy technologies, those that can enable practical energy solutions for communities," **said JMU CASE Executive Director Jonathan Miles.** "This partnership will leverage these technologies as well as the skills and experience of experts state-wide, to address current and future energy challenges and to deliver greater energy resilience in communities throughout the Commonwealth."

"The Virginia Department of Energy has developed a very strong project that will use a sound research strategy and active community engagement to bring the benefits of energy resilience to economically disadvantaged communities," **said Clean Energy States Alliance Executive Director Warren Leon.** "We are delighted to be part of the project team."

"Our team looks forward to working with community members and local governments to reduce the disruptions caused by extreme weather events that impact families and businesses," **said Resilient Virginia Managing Director, Annette Osso.**

"The Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia is excited to work with communities in the coalfields to develop energy resilience plans using solar and battery storage," **said New Economy Program Manager with Appalachian Voices Robert Kell.** "RACER will allow us to host conversations and work with several communities to increase their ability to recover when power goes out."

"This is a great step forward for the Commonwealth. The RACER project represents a major partnership in technology transition and in support to disadvantaged communities," **said Virginia Clean Cities Director Alleyn Harned.**

Communities interested in participating or that have additional questions may contact Virginia Energy at resilience@energy.virginia.gov

Virginia's project is one of 20 selected for the RACER funding across the United States. The federal grant came from the [U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office](#).