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PRESS CONTACT: Pat Mitchell, pmitchell@hastingsgroup.com, 703-276-3266; or Jeff Benzak, 202-513-6248, jeff@e2.org.

E2 Report: Virginia No. 8 in Clean Energy Jobs

Big Solar Announcement Lifts State near Top of U.S. Rankings; Solar also the Top Sector Nationwide; Clean Power Plan Expected to Drive Future Job Growth

ALEXANDRIA (September 3, 2015) – The national nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) today released its latest quarterly clean energy jobs report showing that Virginia tied for No. 8 in the nation in clean energy and clean transportation jobs announced between April and June.

There were 400 jobs announced in Virginia in Q2, and all came from the same announcement – a major, 80-megawatt solar farm in Accomack County on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. The solar farm is being developed by Pennsylvania-based Community Energy to provide clean, renewable energy to Amazon Web Services data centers located in Northern Virginia. The project will be under construction in 2016.

The report is available [here](#) and at www.cleanenergyworksforus.org. It comes ahead of the Labor Day weekend and on the heels of President Obama’s three-week, cross-country trip to highlight the dangers of – and solutions to – climate change.

“Virginia is a leader in the clean energy economy and this latest ranking offers still more evidence,” said Will Gathright, who runs a Northern Virginia-based energy efficiency start-up firm called Tumulow. **“Though the politics surrounding energy continue to be polarizing, what is not controversial is the need to grow and diversify our economy in the Commonwealth. Every day, Virginians get good-paying jobs from this fast-growing technology sector.”**

“Across Virginia, major opportunities are emerging in high-growth industries like solar, wind, energy storage, and energy efficiency,” Gathright said. **“All of us can save money in our homes, businesses and schools by using energy smarter – money that is reinvested into our communities rather than sent outside our borders.”**

“We are at our strongest when we are unified, and we must ensure Virginia is in the strongest position possible to seize these opportunities,” he said. **“Virginia’s business community supports working with government for continuing prosperity. We can start by collaborating on a sensible state response to the federal Clean Power Plan.”**

The Virginia announcement was one of nearly 40 across 22 states in the second quarter. The nationwide jobs number for Q2 – nearly 10,500 – is slightly higher than the first quarter of the year, but lower than the corresponding quarter last year. Partly due to declining materials costs, solar was once again the top sector nationwide with nearly 6,500 announced jobs. Nearly 2,800 jobs were announced in the wind industry, 450 in advanced vehicles, and almost 200 in the advanced biofuels industry.

Earlier this month, the Environmental Protection Agency finalized the Clean Power Plan, which will cut carbon pollution from power plants 32 percent nationwide in part by increasing renewable energy and energy efficiency.

“States across the country are realizing that clean energy doesn’t just mean clean air and water – it also means good-paying jobs,” said Bob Keefe, E2’s executive director. **“The sun doesn’t just shine on Texas, and California doesn’t have a monopoly on energy efficiency. With the federal Clean Power Plan as a road map, there’s no reason every state in America shouldn’t be adding more clean energy – and the jobs that come with it.”**

For more on how the Clean Power Plan is good for Virginia’s economy and environment, please see the following resources:

- E2’s www.cleanenergyworksforus.org/virginia page, which includes links to stories highlighting the people and businesses behind Virginia’s clean energy economy.
- [Our poll of Virginia small business owners](#) on economic and environmental issues.
- [Our Q1 2015 clean energy jobs report](#), which ranked Virginia in the top 10 for the first time.
- [An op-ed by E2 members published last week](#) explaining how policies like the Clean Power Plan can create good job opportunities for thousands of Virginia’s veterans.

Texas was the top state in the country with more than 2,160 jobs, most of which were tied to solar and wind projects. Meanwhile, all of No. 2 Nevada’s 1,900 jobs were part of the new Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone, which is one of 19 carefully sited zones on public lands in the West with expedited permitting processes. California was No. 3 with 1,200 jobs, Utah ranked fourth with 800 jobs, and Virginia’s neighbor North Carolina was No. 5 with 700 jobs.

The new Q2 report features case studies of two companies: Community Energy – which is building the previously referenced Eastern Shore solar farm – and Georgia-based Hannah Solar.

To interview Alexandria-based E2 Mid-Atlantic advocate Alice Tong, E2 executive director Bob Keefe, or E2 members who live and work in Virginia, please reach out to the contacts listed at the top of this press release.

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***Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2)** is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for smart policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. Our members have founded or funded more than 2,500 companies, created more than 600,000 jobs,*

and manage more than \$100 billion in venture and private equity capital. For more information, see www.e2.org or follow us on Twitter at [@e2org](https://twitter.com/e2org).