Kentucky Solar Energy Under Attack

By Wallace McMullen, KySES Chair, Solar Over Louisville Director

Kentucky’s policy regarding homeowner solar systems is threatened by the legislature this year.

For the past 10 years s residential solar systems have had a financial arrangement available known as “net-metering” which allows homeowners to interconnect with the larger electric grid in a way that solar advocates regard as reasonably fair. Net-metering means that on hot summer days, when on-peak solar electricity is transferred to the grid, the homeowner receives a 1:1 credit to apply later on their electric bill. This law has allowed our nascent solar industry to emerge and begin to grow in Kentucky. Although still pretty small, (distributed solar installations currently makes up less than 1/10,000th of power supply in Kentucky), over 1,000 Kentuckians can now tie their jobs to the solar industry. But this policy now is being attacked.

A bill – HB227 – has been introduced by Rep. Gooch from western KY which would eliminate residential net metering in Kentucky.

It proposes:

- Solar credits will be replaced with utility cash payments at a rate 70% lower than the current credit value, and which cannot be accumulated.
- The annual savings for typical residential net-metered solar systems would thereby drop by at least 44%.
- The PSC will have rate cases for every utility pertaining to solar interconnection, which will be an insurmountable legal and financial burden for solar installers.

The Kentucky Solar Energy Society believes most of Kentucky’s solar industry will be forced out of business by this bill. Hundreds of jobs will vanish.
Please take action! You may call the legislative message service, 1-800-372-7181 or 502-564-8100, and urge legislators to oppose HB227. Leave a message for your legislator and the entire House Natural Resources & Energy Committee.

Or, if you would like to meet with your legislator this week, and would like assistance, please call 502-209-9659 and we have allies on hand to provide legislative support.

One additional action you can take is to send a letter. Please review, sign and share this letter to members of the KY General Assembly opposing HB 227, a bill that threatens our homegrown solar industry in Kentucky. The deadline to sign this letter is Tuesday night in order to be included on a version that will go to members of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee. Last year a coalition of solar advocates collected about 250 signatures in a rapid hurry from business and organizational leaders across the state, and it helped defeat a similarly bad bill. This letter was written by Andy McDonald (original founder of KySES) and Lisa Abbott (organizer with KFTC) It has been encouraged by a group of solar advocates who have been working on these issues for a long time. But it’s not coming from any one place or organization.

That said, there are many organization who are actively working to defeat this bill, and we hope you will support and engage with them. These groups include the Kentucky Solar Energy Society, Kentucky Resource Council, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, Kentucky Conservation Committee, Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition, Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light, the Kentucky Solar Energy Association, Solar Over Louisville, Louisville Climate Action Network, Sierra Club, individual solar businesses and leaders, the Kentucky Council of Churches, and many more groups who are active at the local and state levels. (Please forgive unintended omissions!)

Many of these and other organizations have come together under the banner of the Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance. Please register to join KySEA members in Frankfort on February 22nd for a lobby day.

Lastly, for those who are interested, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth is hosting an open conference call this Wednesday night at 7:30 pm ET for concerned Kentuckians to learn about HB 227 and discuss ways to take action.

Save the Date: KySES Annual Meeting Set for May 18

By Wallace McMullen, KySES Chair, Solar Over Louisville Director
This year’s annual meeting will be on May 18, 2018 at the Wilderness Trace Solar facility in Danville, KY. They are located at the corner of US 127 and Stewarts Lane North, address 70 Stewarts Lane North, Danville, KY 40422

Besides our usual program, we will have a change to tour the Wilderness Trace facilities and view a number of projects that they have installed and are in process. These include Culligan Water's off grid warehouse and solar array which powers their business, plus powering a water capture system that captures rain water from their building and pumps into holding tanks to be used in as process water in their manufacturing process. We will also have a chance to look over off grid solar powered streetlights, Denyo Manufacturing’s solar array, and tour some other installations in the area.

So save the date, and make plans to be in Danville on May 18th!

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**KySES Supports "Solar Saves Lives" in Puerto Rico**

By Andy McDonald, Earth Tools, Inc.

Following the devastation of Hurricanes Maria and Irma, Puerto Rico’s electricity grid was severely damaged and large parts of the Island remain without electricity today. The Solar Saves Lives initiative was organized by the Solar Foundation, in partnership with local relief organizations and the Clinton Foundation, to coordinate the delivery and installation of solar energy equipment to areas in need.

In January 2018 the KYSES board agreed to donate $500 to the Solar Saves Lives initiative and to publicize their efforts among our members to encourage additional support. The KYSES will also donate a portion of new membership dues or renewals in 2018 to Solar Saves Lives. Solar Saves Lives is accepting in-kind donations of equipment or monetary donations. However, they report that they can make more effective use of monetary donations, which allows them to provide integrated systems that will work most effectively for their communities.

Donations can be made online at [www.solarsaveslives.org](http://www.solarsaveslives.org).
Solar Saves Lives is currently focusing its efforts on providing battery-based PV systems to supply critical needs at two food markets in San Juan and at 60 rural medical clinics. They have established relationships with a local solar engineering firm that is donating engineering and design services and with local relief agencies to assist with aid delivery. They have established a supply chain for delivering equipment from Florida to Puerto Rico.

The Solar Foundation’s vision is to support the development of micro-grids that could eventually interconnect with the power grid and increase overall grid reliability.

If you or your business has a website, you can help promote the Solar Saves Lives initiative, as KYSES member Earth Tools has done (see [www.EarthTools.com](http://www.EarthTools.com)), with a link on your homepage.

**Solar Creates Safe Water for Puerto Rico**

By Thad Druffel, KySES Board Member

Hurricane Maria ripped through Puerto Rico in September of 2017 devastating the infrastructure including the water and energy distribution. Residents of Puerto Rico were left without water and electricity, a situation that was not going to change fast enough. WaterStep, a Louisville nonprofit dedicated to delivering safe water to remote locations all over the globe, took notice and came up with a solution to provide safe water using solar energy.
Almost immediately after the Hurricane landed the staff and volunteers at WaterStep looked into their toolbox to determine how their solutions to safe water could be quickly deployed for this situation. One problem that loomed large was the lack of reliable electricity, including gas powered generators, that could support their equipment. The team had previously used flexible solar panels to run the chlorine generators and bleach makers on a small scale. Puerto Rico was different. In the end the team was able to mobilize and produce over 100 kits for transport to the Island.

In October, only weeks after Maria, the team delivered the first 22 of their systems each fitted with a flexible solar panel for electric power. The units were delivered by a team of volunteers who spent nearly a week training emergency workers and community leaders. This important team was organized by Alexandra Lugaro, a WaterStep liaison living in Puerto Rico. Each one of the systems left behind can potentially supply 10,000 to 30,000 gallons of safe water per day.

“That’s the equivalent of a 747 airplane full of water bottles” says Mark Hogg, founder and CEO of WaterStep. “In fact, they only need a local supply of water, salt and energy, which can come from the sun.”

By Thanksgiving, WaterStep had completed the shipment of the units to Puerto Rico. They continue to prepare, and are now well positioned to offer a solar and water solution. For more information visit www.waterstep.org.

**Clean Energy Lobby Day: Feb. 22**

By Lane Boldman, Kentucky Conservation Committee, Executive Director
The **Kentucky Sustainable Energy Alliance** planning committee has designated **February 22, 2018** at the State Capitol Annex in Frankfort as a Clean Energy Lobby Day to support the Clean Energy Opportunity Act (**HB196**) and to retain current net metering laws for solar energy by opposing **HB227**.

Representative Mary Lou Marzian has once again filed the **Clean Energy Opportunity Act**, (**HB196**) designed to require retail electrical suppliers to use increasing amounts of renewable energy and require electrical suppliers to energy efficiency programs. This legislation has been a signature bill for KySEA, and we are hoping to enlist co-sponsors as part of our lobbying activities.

In addition, **HB227, An Act Relating to Net Metering**, is an industry-sponsored bill that will fundamentally, and negatively, change solar net metering laws, filed on January 22nd. KySEA has listed the defense of existing net metering laws as one of our priorities this year.

**Please review, sign and share this letter to members of the KY General Assembly opposing HB 227.**

In addition to our lobby day on February 22, KySEA is also working with allies to include these same legislative priorities through lobby days organized by other organizations in order to maximize opportunities for citizen engagement on these important issues. To date these include days scheduled by the **Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition** (Feb. 12), **Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light with Kentucky Council of Churches** (Feb. 13), and the **Kentucky Conservation Committee** (March 14).

**We encourage you to fill out the form linked below to let us know which dates you will be available to come to Frankfort to lobby for clean energy.** We are also asking for volunteers to help be part of a coordinating group for our dedicated KySEA day on February 22, 2018.

**Please respond to the following link** to let us know how you will be able to participate in support of clean energy.
SES Installs Largest Kentucky Retail Solar Array for Oxmoor Mall

By Steve Ricketts, Solar Energy Solutions General Manager and Owner

Louisville ended 2017 with a major leap forward in its plans to advance its stated clean energy goals when the Oxmoor Mall, owned by General Growth Partners and Mayor Greg Fisher welcomed the arrival of a 787 kW rooftop solar array generating over 1,000,000 kWh/yr. of energy, equivalent to powering 80 regular homes. Solar Energy Solutions was chosen earlier in the year to install this mammoth system, the biggest by a factor of 10 ever seen in Jefferson County and the largest retail based solar array in the state.

Comprised of 2316 340W Hanwha Q CELLS panels and 23 Huawei roof mounted inverters together with custom monitoring systems and even a weather station this large non-penetrating ballast based array (with over 10,000 concrete blocks!) will make a very large dent in the mall’s LG&E bill! GGP who has other retail properties in Kentucky and 126 locations nationally now has solar on over 40 of its retail hubs with strong plans to keep adding more every year. Good for the planet and good for the bottom line; SES is proud to be powering the growth of institutional and commercial solar at an ever increasing rate in the Bluegrass State.
The Mountain Association of Community Economic Development (MACED) has partnered with the East Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) to offer the New Energy Internship Program throughout the Eastern Kentucky Region. This six month long internship seeks to place interns either at the organization they are interning with, or equip them with the skills to start their own business immediately following the internships end. This program has been uniquely designed for people that live in eastern Kentucky and have been displaced by the coal industry at some point in their careers.

Thus far, two interns have been placed in Harlan and Hazard Kentucky at energy efficiency programs. We now have openings through Solar Energy Solutions for those interested in solar energy. Attached is a flyer with position descriptions and contact information. We encourage those who have been displaced by the coal industry and are interested in the internship program to follow up with Cindy Montgomery. However, if you do not match that description, but are still interested in a solar energy job, please consider reaching out to Solar Energy Solutions directly.

KySES Supports Solar for Good Foundation

By Barbara Szubinska, Kentucky Solar for Good Board Member
Late in 2017, a group of enthusiasts launched Kentucky Solar for Good Foundation with the mission of supporting non-profit organizations’ efforts to go solar. We have drafted a mission statement: Solar for Good is a foundation dedicated to supporting energy independence among non-profit entities across Kentucky by helping them fund solar installations. We will offer grants, low interest loans, and logistical help to organizations that want to improve health of their communities and bolster their operating budgets by producing their own electricity.

Kentucky Solar for Good is operating under KYSES, with a separate budget. The foundation is in the process of applying for community donations at Kroger and Amazon. We have launched a website at www.kentuckysolarforgood.org. We are also reaching out to community leaders who might be willing to serve on the foundation’s board. We are hoping to raise enough funds to start accepting applications from non-profits later this year.

Welcome New Members

Since our previous newsletter, the following have joined KySES:

- Brian Markham

Thanks so much to these fine folks and to our renewing members as well! Our membership is very inexpensive and important to help educate and promote solar energy in Kentucky!

You can join both KySES and ASES, including a subscription to Solar Today magazine, for just $60 annually. Click here for this special offer, and pick Kentucky as your chapter in the check-out process.

Board of Directors

The following individuals are KySES board members. Feel free to contact any of us with suggestions and feedback.

- Wallace McMullen, Chair
- Kathryn Mullen, Co-Chair
- Rachel Norton, Treasurer
- John Cotten, Secretary
- Thad Druffel
- Richard Levine
- Jamie Clark
- Shari Mullen

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events
(For details, go to Events)

Feb 22 - Clean Energy Lobby Day in Frankfort, see above article for details

Support Solar with a License Plate!

As a solar advocate, would you like to show your support with a solar themed license plate? We need your help to make this available to everyone. We have gathered over 300 signatures and need
Find us on Facebook
Contact email: kysesinfo@gmail.com

KySES Memberships are very affordable!
$20 for individuals or $10 for students.
Business memberships are $100 to $500.
Visit www.kyses.org for details!

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