

Press Release

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Investing in Efficiency, Wind and Solar Would Be Cheaper, Safer for Virginians than Dominion's Plan, Report Finds

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Richmond, VA – Within ten years, energy efficiency, solar and wind could power about a million Virginia homes—likely at a lower cost than building new fossil fuel-fired power plants—according to a detailed analysis released today. Bringing new clean energy sources online would cost between \$633 million and \$1.78 billion less than Dominion Virginia Power's current plan to build two large natural gas-fired power plants, the report found. Further, clean energy investments by Dominion would yield additional benefits for all Virginians, including cleaner air as well as reduced carbon pollution, which contributes to rising sea levels and stronger storms. A coalition of environmental groups released the 30-page analysis in advance of Dominion's 2013 long-range plan, which the company is required to file by September 1. When the "Integrated Resource Plan" goes before the State Corporation Commission for approval, the groups will encourage policymakers and the public to evaluate Dominion's plan through the lens of this analysis. Dominion is the state's largest electric utility, providing power to about two-thirds of Virginians. To conduct the analysis, entitled "Changing Course: A Clean Energy Investment Plan for Dominion Virginia Power," a team of three independent research firms--the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, Optimal Energy, and Sommer Energy--examined options for increasing investments in clean energy sources at a level that is economically competitive, technologically feasible and currently viable under Virginia's regulatory structure.

"Dominion is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, and with its preferred resource plan, will continue to remain so for the indefinite future," said David Schlissel, Director of Resource Planning Analysis for the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis and lead author for the report. "Our report shows that there is significant potential for energy efficiency and low-cost renewable solar and wind energy in Virginia, and that a less expensive, less risky clean energy alternative can be developed that would help protect Dominion's customers from future fossil fuel cost

increases and the costs of greenhouse gas emissions.”

“Virginia’s potential to save electricity through efficiency measures could be its biggest energy resource,” said Jeff Loiter, Managing Consultant with Optimal Energy. “Dominion’s current plan would achieve less than half of the 10 percent energy savings goal set by the Virginia General Assembly, and it pales in comparison to the potential we found in our analysis.”

The report was commissioned by the Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition, which released the findings today in conjunction with the launch of a statewide campaign, “New Power for the Old Dominion.” The campaign is geared to educate Virginians about the economic and environmental benefits of clean energy and to build public support for reforming state policies and encouraging utilities to substantially increase investments in wind, solar and energy efficiency projects. The campaign is kicking off with a petition drive and a series of public presentations around the state.

Highlights from the report include:

- A clean energy plan that adds 3,810 MW of emissions-free renewable energy (2,450 MW solar, 360 MW land-based wind, and 1,000 offshore wind) and conserves nearly 3,000 MW through energy efficiency would cost between \$633 million and \$1.78 billion less than Dominion’s current plan to build two large fossil-fired power plants.
- According to the 2010 Virginia Energy Report, the Commonwealth has the potential to generate over 41,000 MW of emissions-free solar and wind energy. Dominion has significant room for improvement, as its 2012 plan proposed adding just 282 MW (34 MW solar, 248 MW onshore wind, and 0 MW offshore wind), less than 1 percent of Virginia’s potential.
- At a moderate energy savings rate of 1.3% a year, a clean energy plan could yield nearly 3,000 MW by 2027. Yet Dominion’s current plan yields only 821 MW of savings by then, less than one-third of the company’s modest potential and less than half of the states’ voluntary 10% goal.
- A clean energy plan that replaces Dominion’s current plan to build two fossil-fired power plants would reduce the company’s carbon dioxide emissions by 31 million tons between 2014 and 2027, and by an additional 121 million tons between 2027 and 2037.

Statements from members of the Wise Energy for Virginia coalition:

“This report confirms that Dominion’s current model of favoring fossil-fired generation over clean energy resources is outdated and costly,” said Angela Navarro, attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center who represents members of the Wise Energy for Virginia Coalition in proceedings before the State Corporation Commission. “Investing in solar, wind, and energy efficiency resources will generate new jobs, reduce environmental impacts, and lower electricity bills.”

“The effects of climate change, like sea level rise and stronger storms, are already costing Virginians millions of dollars,” said Beth Kemler, Virginia state director for the

Chesapeake Climate Action Network. "When we see that investments in energy sources that release no climate pollution could save Dominion customers money over investing in more fossil fuels, it's a no-brainer which path the company should take."

"Virginia has no excuse not to take part wholly in a 21st century clean-energy economy," said Kate Rooth, campaign director with Appalachian Voices. "This report adds to the mounting evidence from around the country that switching to clean energy is a win-win-win, for citizens, for the economy, and for future generations."

"The Changing Course report projects Dominion's current plans will put our families at risk by worsening climate disruption with a 50 percent increase in its carbon pollution over the next 20 years. This means Dominion will be contributing to more of the dangerous and costly extreme weather like heat waves, droughts and sea level rise that is already harming Virginia communities," said Glen Besa, director of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club. "That is a plan which is reckless, irresponsible and costly to all Virginians."

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