



Localities Looking to Lead on Renewable Energy

By Taylor Bennett

Arlington and Alexandria have long been leaders within the Commonwealth on environmental policy, and now the Arlington and Alexandria Ready for 100 campaigns are poised to demonstrate this leadership again.

We're pushing local government leaders to make a commitment to transition to 100% clean, renewable electricity community-wide by 2035.

We know that renewable energy is hitting its stride--solar prices have dropped by 80% in recent years, and the industry has grown at a rate 12% higher than the overall economy--and local leaders around the world are stepping up to take advantage of the economic, health, and energy security benefits renewables can offer. The time is ripe for localities in the United States to take action as well.



Launched nationally last January and in Arlington and Alexandria in June, the [Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign](#) places the power to act for renewable energy in local hands, boldly declaring that if federal and state-level decision makers can't or won't take action, local communities and their decision makers will. This approach allows community leaders, experts, and activists to work together to create plans for reaching the 100% goal that are specifically adapted to the unique needs of the communities that they will impact.

In Arlington and Alexandria, that means advocating for a transition plan that is both feasible and inclusive. Efforts to demonstrate the feasibility of such a commitment are surging forward with a round table discussion in Arlington which is aimed at connecting county- and state-level decision makers and staff with experts who can help them learn more about the technical

aspects of an implementation plan. While this meeting will not be open to the public, plans are in the works for community info sessions as well.

Such a strong focus on local action poses unique challenges in Virginia, particularly in light of blockades at the state level. Volunteers and staff are confident, however, that 100% commitments from localities in Virginia will apply much-needed pressure and prompt action to support these goals in Richmond.

With a strong and growing base of support, now is the perfect time to add your voice to the demand for 100% clean, renewable energy in Arlington and Alexandria.



Join us on October 2nd in Arlington and help us create a human work of art supporting our 100% goal (see the picture above for an example). We will be one stop on the national Aerial Art Tour, highlighting our localities and others dedicated to taking the lead on renewable energy. Or, you can [sign our online petition](#) to show decision makers how many people are eager to see Alexandria and Arlington lead the way.

16 cities in the United States have already made a commitment to 100% and a few, like Burlington, VT, and Greenville, KS, have already achieved their goal. It's feasible and it's feasible now. Arlington and Alexandria can with be next, leading the ground swell of local commitments and propelling Virginia and the US into a future not beholden to dirty energy.

Arlington and Alexandria are Ready for 100. Are you?

This content originally appeared in the September 2016 issue of the Mount Vernon Sierran, the Mount Vernon Group's quarterly newsletter. For more information about the Mount Vernon Group, please visit virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/.