



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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KRIS HOLSTROM   HILARY COOPER   JOAN MAY

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September 21, 2018

International City/County Management Association  
777 North Capitol St. NE, Ste. 500  
Washington, DC 20002

The Solar Foundation  
1717 Pennsylvania AVE NW, Ste. 750  
Washington, DC 20006

To All Interested Parties:

On behalf of San Miguel County, Colorado, I am proud to announce our commitment to become a SolSmart-designated community. In partnership with the SolSmart team, San Miguel County's dedicated staff members will work to improve solar market conditions, making it faster, more accessible, and more affordable for our residents and businesses to install solar energy systems. These efforts will also increase the efficiency of local processes related to solar development, which may save our local government time and money.

SolSmart is in harmony with our Board of County Commissioners' 2018 Goals. In 2017 and 2018, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) announced that one of its goals is for the San Miguel County organization to "Work Toward Becoming Carbon Neutral." Actions we are taking in 2018 in support of this goal are:

- Seeking a SolSmart designation.
- Initiating updating our building and energy codes, including adopting the 2018 IECC with amendments to progress energy efficiency.
- Issuing an RFP for solar consultants to prioritize county actions and resources to retrofit existing facilities with net-metered solar PV systems.
- Conducting an analysis to determine our next steps to become carbon neutral as an organization.
- Accomplishing a twenty-two solar PV panel array on a new park and ride structure.
- Examining our county assets to determine a location and power agreement arrangement to generate all electricity used by the county organization using solar PV. Solar PV arrays will have to be concentrated at certain county facilities vs. being generated on-site at all county facilities. A net-metering and accounting arrangement must be figured out with to our electric utility San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) and Tri-State.
- Installing a solar PV system at the County Fairgrounds and "Pig Palace" barn in 2018.

San Miguel County will leverage SolSmart to achieve the following goals:

- Increase the number of solar installations and kW generated within San Miguel County. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of grid-tied PV systems increased from 90 to 101 and the number of kW generated increased from 496 to 565 kW. This represents more than an eleven percent increase in one year. We also have a 197-kW solar array serving income qualified community members operated by SMPA on a former County landfill. We want to increase the number of systems and kW even more rapidly.
- Work toward becoming carbon neutral as an organization. This means using our assets and resources to generate electricity from solar PV and off-setting the other carbon emissions created by our governmental activities.
- We desire to be considered for the SolSmart technical assistance challenge. We are in need of technical assistance to examine our county assets (facility locations and property) to determine a location(s) to locate solar PV arrays that will generate all of the electrical power used by the county organization. One challenge is that the solar PV arrays will not be able to be located at the county facilities that consume the most electrical power. Therefore, a viable arrangement with SMPA and Tri-State will have to be created.

SolSmart is supported by the County's mission, goals, energy policies, and active participation in local, regional and state partnerships. These efforts demonstrate that San Miguel County and our community partners are committed to driving continuous improvement in our solar market, and in the process of doing so, all the related areas identified as County, local and regional priorities. Examples of our policies and activities in support of SolSmart:

- Article 2, Section 2-30<sup>1</sup> of San Miguel County's Land Use Code contains the county's energy policy.
  - *"It is the policy of the County to encourage features in any development that will conserve energy resources and minimize the consumption of energy."*
  - Our energy conservation policy is to *"Encourage the utilization and incorporation of energy conservation measures...and alternative energy sources, including but not limited to passive solar design, wind generation, geothermal, photovoltaic [emphasis added], hydrogen fuel cells, etc. for all construction in the County."*
- Resolution 2009-3<sup>2</sup> contains:
  - the BOCC's support for promoting an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 2009 levels by 2050;
  - the BOCC's support for accomplishing a 20% reduction of energy emissions in San Miguel County below 2009 levels by 2020;
  - The BOCC's commitment to create and co-fund the regional organization now known as EcoAction Partners.
- The BOCC's Mission statement for San Miguel County<sup>3</sup> includes working to ensure that our residents are healthy and flourishing, and practicing responsible stewardship of our

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/211/Article-2---Land-Use-Policies-PDF>; Page 2-12

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thecountyrecorder.com/Image.aspx?DK=94863&PN=1>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/279/BOCCCommissioners>

environment; reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the use of solar and renewable energy improves air quality and health and environmental quality. As mentioned above, the 2018 BOCC Goals<sup>4</sup> include working towards the county organization becoming carbon neutral.

- San Miguel County BOCC Resolution 2017-27<sup>5</sup> authorized the Colorado New Energy Improvement District to conduct the Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program in San Miguel County.
- San Miguel County and its BOCC are active participants in collaborative partnerships with a nexus to reducing energy-related emissions and increasing electricity used regionally that is generated by solar or renewable energy, including, San Miguel Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)<sup>6</sup>, Eco-Action Partners<sup>7</sup>, Sneffels Energy Board<sup>8</sup>, San Miguel Power Association<sup>9</sup>, and Colorado Communities for Climate Action<sup>10</sup>.

SolSmart will provide a boost of awareness and momentum to our efforts. Winter recreation and Telluride Ski Resort are major economic engines in San Miguel County and precipitation falling as snow is essential to the survival of our ecosystems and to our ranching and agriculture sectors. San Miguel County has an abundance of sunshine and the vast majority of renewable energy systems installed are solar PV systems. SolSmart also builds on our County's participation in several local and regional efforts that work toward the measurable reduction of carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and increase of renewable energy use. For example:

- San Miguel County is a founding partner and co-funder of Eco-Action Partners and the Sneffels Energy Board which has programs to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy use, and increase access to electricity generated by solar PV systems.
- The county reduced electricity use at county facilities by 9% between 2014 and 2017. The county reduced natural gas use at its facilities by 12% between 2013 and 2017. The county has systematically retrofitted county facilities with LED bulbs.
- San Miguel County BOCC announced their support for a proposed 30-megawatt solar power plant in adjacent Montrose County.<sup>11</sup>
- A major joint goal of the County and EcoAction Partners is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are due to energy use by 20% by the year 2020. Currently, 51% of the county's greenhouse gas emissions are from residential and commercial energy use. Despite an increase in population and a 6% growth rate, an 11% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use has been achieved in San Miguel and adjacent Ouray Counties between 2010 and 2017.
- San Miguel County BOCC actively participates with EcoAction Partners to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions and coordinate sustainability projects and programs, including:
  - The GreenLights LED program to incentivize the use of and reduce the cost of LED lights;
  - Marketing and operation of an income qualified (IQ) energy program that incorporates energy efficiency retrofits and off-sets utility bills with solar power produced at a 197 kW

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3455/2018-SMC-BOCC-Goals-PDF>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thecountyrecorder.com/Document.aspx?DK=442458>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.colorado.gov/smarttelluride>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ecoactionpartners.org/energy-programs/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ecoactionpartners.org/emissions-programs/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ecoactionpartners.org/smpa-iq> and <http://www.smpa.com/content/renewable-energy>

<sup>10</sup> <http://cc4ca.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.denverpost.com/2018/09/16/san-miguel-solar-plant/>

facility located on the county's former landfill which the county leases to SMPA for \$1/year;

- Promoting the County's C-PACE<sup>12</sup> program to help commercial properties increase energy efficiency and increase on-site renewable energy systems;
- Tracking and providing awareness of opportunities and incentives to increase electricity offset by Renewable Energy Credits and generated by renewable energy, especially solar PV systems; and
- Acting as a clearinghouse for rebates and companion programs.

San Miguel County BOCC is committed to reducing waste and emissions not only by incentivizing energy efficiency and renewable energy but also by having programs and policies that sequester carbon and reduce emissions in other ways, such as through active BOCC participation in statewide soil health and composting working groups. SolSmart complements the holistic approach our BOCC is taking toward ensuring clean air, clean water, cooler climate and healthier communities overall.

In order to measure progress along the way, San Miguel County will track key metrics related to solar energy deployment, such as installed solar capacity and the number of installations across sectors. We will improve our ability to track off-grid systems within the county. We are currently able to track grid-tied and net-metered systems with SMPA. Some off-grid systems were installed prior to deployment of our site-development/building permit databases, and some were installed in zones where permits are not required. We will work with landowners, installers, and SMPA to improve tracking of key metrics going forward.

San Miguel County recognizes that our efforts to see increased use of solar and renewable energy and decrease emissions within our County, communities, and region requires staff time and resources, including to track metrics. We will continue to provide necessary staff time and resources required to have effective partnerships and leverage SolSmart. Our BOCC has demonstrated through its goals and active participation in local, regional and statewide efforts that it will continue to prioritize these efforts.

We call on our residents, businesses, non-profits, and others to join us or increase their involvement, and we invite everyone to stay tuned by visiting our [WattsUp San Miguel County](#), web page.

Inquiries related to San Miguel County's SolSmart participation can be directed to Lynn Padgett, Director of Government Affairs and Natural Resources at [lynnp@sanmiguelcountyco.gov](mailto:lynnp@sanmiguelcountyco.gov) or 970-369-5441.

Sincerely,

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, COLORADO  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
Kris Holstrom, Chair

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<sup>12</sup> San Miguel County BOCC Resolution 2017-27 authorized the Colorado New Energy Improvement District to conduct the Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program in San Miguel County.