



St george solar energy for the environment

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The Town of St. George which includes the villages of Tenants Harbor and Port Clyde lies at the heart of Mid-Coast Maine. The peninsula forms the western boundary of Penobscot Bay and covers an area of 23 square miles.

Although there are many clean energy sources we think solar has the greatest promise because it is readily available and requires little maintenance. This section focuses on "active" solar. For general "passive" solar information [click here](#).

Electricity from a solar array is reliable and affordable. Costs have plummeted and due to State and Federal legislation there are more options available for everyone. The Conservation Commission (CC) endorses solar power for all St. George residents, municipal buildings (including school buildings) and businesses. Solar power can replace more costly and environmentally harmful power from carbon based fuels. Although saving money isn't our primary focus it may be for many. So here are ways to improve the environment and save money.

You can purchase an array or set up a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to purchase a set amount of solar power at a discount and in some cases buy the array later on. So consider the following options:

In 2014 the Conservation Commission recognizing both the ecological and financial benefits of solar energy initiated a study to determine the feasibility of installing a solar system to provide electric power for the town's municipal buildings. The study included assessing the power usage, potential locations for installing an array and the financial aspects of installing a system. Over the next year proposals were solicited and evaluated from several potential suppliers.

In late 2015 the Conservation Commission recommended the Town engage with a solar provider to install a ~65 kW photovoltaic (PV) system at the Transfer Station, using a "Power Purchase Agreement" (PPA) to reduce the Town's electricity costs, and be good to the environment. Subsequently the Select Board formed a Working Group, to pursue this recommendation. In 2016 due to the uncertainty in net energy billing, declining costs and improving efficiency - the working group recommended that the Town postpones committing to install a PV system until its economic viability is clearer.

ST. GEORGE - On April 9, the town of St. George and members of the Select Board, Conservation Commission and members of the public, including students from St. George's fourth and seventh grade, gathered at the transfer station to throw the switch on the town's new solar energy system.

Town Manager Tim Polky said the system will help power the town's municipal buildings and save the town



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thousands of dollars, for at least 30 years. The life of the array is estimated at 30 to 40 years and is rated at 67.5 kilowatts.

"Many of our members have taken tours of self sufficient homes that are producing their own power," he said. "We started working with three different contractors looking at different type of payments, funding and operation of the system."

"What is quite neat about having the panels here at the transfer station is the symmetry of what's going on above the roof and beneath the roof," he said. "You have the panels above the roof and recycling going on beneath. The commonality is that both are good for the environment, and both save the town money."

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