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TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Paul Harstad, CEO, Harstad Strategic Research, Inc.
DATE: March 7, 2014
RE: Florida Voter Survey on Net Metering Shows Broad Non-Partisan Support

Our recent telephone survey among 801 likely voters in Florida reveals overwhelming support for “net metering” for utility customers who have solar panels – and overwhelming opposition to any prospective new separate fee for such customers.

Survey respondent voters were asked the following question:

“As you may know, customers who have solar panels use a system called ‘net metering’ to track how much energy they use and how much energy their solar panels generate. If a customer’s solar panels produce more electricity than that customer uses, then the customer gets a credit on their electricity bill. If the customer uses more power than their solar panels generate, the customer gets charged by their utility for that extra electricity – just like any other customer would. In general, would you say you support or oppose this policy of net metering that allows customers with solar power to get credit for any extra power they generate?”

In response, more than three-fourths of Florida voters – 77% -- say they support this net metering policy versus just 13% who oppose it. This broad 6-to-1 support is completely non-partisan, with net metering being favored by 77% of Republicans, 76% of Independents, and 78% of Democrats.

The survey respondents were then asked a second question:

“The electric utilities in Florida may propose charging a new separate fee to customers with solar panels on their roofs because they say those customers don’t pay their fair share of the utilities’ overhead costs – and therefore other customers have to pay more on their bills. Based upon what you know about this, do you favor or oppose the electric utilities’ proposal to charge a new separate fee for customers who generate their own solar power?”

Fully 71% of Florida voters oppose the new fee for solar energy customers while just 17% favor it – a ratio of more than 4-to-1 in opposition. This prospective new fee is opposed by 72% of Republicans, 74% of Independents, and 69% of Democrats.

In short, the support for ‘net metering’ and opposition to any new fee on solar panel customers could hardly be more lopsided nor more non-partisan.

The telephone survey of 801 likely voters was conducted with live interviewers reaching landlines and cell phones in a representative cross-section of the Florida 2014 midterm electorate from February 6 to 11, 2014. The overall sample included 40% who are registered Republicans, 38% who are registered Democrats, and 22% who are Independent or unaffiliated. The overall results are subject to a statistical margin-of-error of plus-or-minus 3.5% about any one reported percentage at the 95% confidence level.