



## NEW STUDY FINDS THAT REPLACING AGING COAL PLANTS WITH WIND AND SOLAR SAVES COLORADO \$2.5 BILLION BY 2040 WHILE SHARPLY SLASHING EMISSIONS

*The key to unlocking emission reductions and electricity bill savings is developing a legal framework allowing utilities and their customers to equitably share the benefits and costs*

**Boulder, CO, January 8, 2019** – A new report commissioned by Community Energy, Inc. finds that replacing Colorado’s aging coal plants with a mix of wind and solar backed by battery storage and natural gas would save Colorado electric customers almost \$250 million per year, over \$2.5 billion in net present value through 2040.

The modeling study, prepared by Vibrant Clean Energy, LLC, shows the proposed fleet of new clean energy resources would also cut Colorado state-wide annual carbon emissions from electric generation by almost 65 percent over the planning horizon as compared to today’s levels. From a state-wide perspective,

this is consistent with the emission reductions required for Colorado to achieve its pro-rata share of international climate change targets. These emission reductions will also remove other harmful pollutants, improving air quality and health outcomes in Colorado.

“Colorado has the opportunity to lead decarbonization in the power sector while lowering customer bills by an average of five percent and providing coal-plant owners the opportunity to recover sunk costs associated with retiring aging coal plants,” said Eric Blank, founder and strategic lead at Community Energy, Inc. “The key to unlocking these benefits is to create a legal framework that



\$2.5 billion cumulative net savings for customers



~3x increase in generation from wind and solar



52% increase in employment in the electricity sector



510 million metric tons less CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere

enables utilities to voluntarily retire the coal plants. Otherwise, it could take years to negotiate or litigate utility cost recovery, replacement power costs and impact on local communities.”

Using assumptions from recent Colorado PUC filings, the study finds that the significant economic benefit of retiring aging coal plants holds true across most natural gas pricing, interest rate and demand growth assumptions. It is primarily driven by the fact that new wind and solar facilities are now less expensive to build than the operating costs of the aging coal fleet.

The report indicates there is an opportunity to recover up to \$1.5 billion in undepreciated asset value by the coal-plant owners to facilitate the voluntary phased retirement of the coal plants. Wind and solar prices in the report reflect a mix of both utility and private ownership, consistent with the approach adopted in the recent Colorado PUC-approved retirement of two coal units in Pueblo Colorado.

According to Dr Christopher Clack, CEO of Vibrant Clean Energy, “The Community Energy sponsored study confirms and quantifies what we’ve been seeing elsewhere – wind and solar are now cheaper than the operating costs of many aging coal plants. Colorado is blessed with some of the best solar and wind resources in the country, which should allow for a quicker and a more affordable transition to clean energy.”

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A summary of the study and its key assumptions can be downloaded at:

[www.communityenergyinc.com/press](http://www.communityenergyinc.com/press)

and

[www.vibrantcleanenergy.com/media/reports](http://www.vibrantcleanenergy.com/media/reports)

**About Community Energy:** For more than twenty years, clean energy project developer Community Energy, Inc. has partnered with utilities, Fortune 500 companies and local communities to develop over 1,500 MW of solar and wind generation, equaling \$3 billion in invested capital. As an early pioneer in commercializing renewable energy assets, Community Energy leverages emerging technologies and resources to support decarbonization of our energy systems and promote fuel-free approaches. Headquartered in Radnor, Pennsylvania and with offices in Boulder, Colorado and Chapel Hill North Carolina, Community Energy has a strong presence in diverse geographical markets. For more information about Community Energy please visit [www.communityenergyinc.com](http://www.communityenergyinc.com)

**About Vibrant Clean Energy:** A nationally recognized energy grid modeling firm based in Colorado. VCE creates computer optimization software to study pathways for energy systems futures. It also performs studies using WIS:dom to provide expertise in new arenas of electrification, decarbonization and variable resources. The mission of VCE is to help facilitate universal, sustainable, and cheap energy for everyone. For more information visit: [www.vibrantcleanenergy.com](http://www.vibrantcleanenergy.com)

