
Final Report

**Database of State Incentives for
Renewable Energy (DSIRE)**

Contract #: DE-FG02-99EE35134

Contract Period: September 24, 1999 – December 31, 2000

**Performing Organization:
Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)**

Report submitted to the Department of Energy: January 2001

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Contract Period:	September 24, 1999 – December 31, 2000
Performing Organization:	Interstate Renewable Energy Council, P.O. Box 1156, Latham, NY 12110
Organization Type:	Non-Profit
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Introduction

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council is pleased to report that all of the activities and deliverables under Contract # DE-FG02-99EE35134 have been completed and delivered to the US Department of Energy within budget. Four quarterly reports were submitted throughout the course of this contract containing detailed information on the status and accomplishments.

This final report summarizes the accomplishments of the DSIRE program from September 24, 1999 through September 2000. The remaining three months of this contract was used to complete projects and finalize reports. In the interest of not generating unnecessary paper and repeating the comprehensive accounts described in our quarterly reports, this final report serves as an over-all review of this DSIRE cycle. If more detailed information is required, please see the quarterly reports or contact the Principal Investigator listed above.

Objectives & Approach

The Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (DSIRE) is an ongoing project to survey, catalogue and summarize state, local and utility incentives, programs and policies for renewable energy.

The Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy actively serves as the nation's most comprehensive one-stop source of detailed and current information on state and local government incentives, programs and regulatory policies, as well as utility programs and incentives, designed to promote the implementation of renewable energy technology. Information on existing incentives is distributed primarily through the DSIRE

web site to government agencies, consumers, businesses, industry, utilities, consumer and environmental organizations, education professionals and regulatory officials. DSIRE can be accessed on the internet at www-solar.mck.ncsu.edu/dsire.htm.

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), a consortium of state and local government agencies and renewable energy organizations, currently manages DSIRE with funding from the Office of Power Technologies, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, U.S. Department of Energy. Since 1995, the North Carolina Solar Center (NCSC), located in the College of Engineering at North Carolina State University, operates DSIRE for IREC.

Advancement in the use of renewable energy over the past decade is due, in part, to progress in coordinating renewable energy policies, programs and initiatives across governmental levels and sectors of business. Through recent efforts by IREC's DSIRE project, information on existing state, local government and utility incentives, policies and programs has been easier for the general public and government agencies to access and, as a result, use of these programs is increasing.

The DSIRE project's primary objective is to provide a single resource for available renewable energy incentive programs. Information produced by DSIRE is of increasing value to an audience of:

- State and local energy offices and regulatory agencies that may be considering new programs or initiatives, or extensions and expansions of past programs;
- State regulatory agencies or utility commissions that have approval or authority over the creation of regulatory incentives;
- Utility companies who may be considering the creation of new programs and incentives for renewable energy;
- Consumers, businesses, and renewable energy industries that need timely information on such incentives for purchasing and business planning;
- Schools and youth activity organizations seeking exciting and innovative applications of science and technology; and
- Renewable energy, environmental and consumer organizations advancing the utilization of renewable energy technologies.

DSIRE – Tasks, Accomplishments & Deliverables

Task 1. Maintain Information Accuracy and Provide Access to Information

Update website on a monthly basis with new data as available

This task has been successfully completed on an on-going basis with *DSIRE on Line* being updated at least monthly throughout the entire contract period. Updates have included state, local, and utility financial and regulatory incentives. Over the course of the contract we have begun updating *DSIRE on Line* more frequently than monthly owing to the rapid changes in incentives information and the growth in the number of programs.

On-going communication with incentive contacts and yearly confirmation surveys

This task has been successfully completed. In 2000, state surveys were sent via email and fax to the respective state contacts. Responses from the surveys were entered into the database and thus added to *DSIRE on Line*. These survey responses from the states also provided valuable and timely information for the state and local hard copy reports.

Combined DSIRE state regulatory policy and financial incentive summary report

The combined state and financial incentives report was completed and published in December 2000. The report, entitled *National Summary Report on State Financial and Regulatory Incentives for Renewable Energy*, is 158 pages with program and incentive information from forty-six states and the District of Columbia. Two hundred hard copies of the report were printed. This report will be available on the DSIRE website in .pdf format in January 2001.

Add forms for updating contact and program information details to website

This task was altered. Due to the lackluster response from the local government incentives survey on the web, we decided it would not be a prudent expenditure of effort to develop this sort of response form. However, while wrapping up the contract in December, the DSIRE project team has conceived of a better system for soliciting comments and updates via the website, and we are discussing plans with our new webmaster to implement individual response forms for each incentive summary. This task will be completed as a “non-deliverable” activity under the new DSIRE contract.

Task 2. Expand DSIRE to Include Local Government Programs, Policies, and Incentives

Survey local government agencies that have current incentives

This task was successfully completed. Over one hundred different cities and towns were surveyed. The process included mailing surveys to contacts; putting the on-line survey up on the DSIRE website; and following up with phone calls and email. In general we found that there was little response to the on-line survey form, which forced the project team to rely more on direct phone and email contact. The on-line survey form has now been removed from the website.

Add local government incentives to DSIRE database and to *DSIRE on Line*

The task was successfully completed. A local government programs table has been added to *DSIRE on Line*. This table lists forty-six communities and the types of incentives that they offer. In addition to the viewable html version of the table, it is available for download in .pdf format. This table does not, though, provide detailed program summary information. However, through the on-line search form, local government and community programs with detailed summaries can be searched. Currently, detailed program summaries are available for fifty-nine different community programs. This list continues to be expanded under the new 2000 – 2001 DSIRE contract.

Provide information to organizations working directly with local governments

This task area has been somewhat modified by the project team. Rather than produce specific briefing papers, models of different incentive types were added to the appendices of the Local Government report, which is available in hard copy and on *DSIRE on Line* in .pdf format (see below). The DSIRE project team also continues to work directly with local leaders seeking technical assistance. Instead of developing issue briefs for an undetermined audience, we have found it more effective to work directly with local constituents as information requests surface.

Task 3. Include Public Sector Programs, Policies and Incentives

Survey state government agencies that have current incentives

This task was successfully completed. As part of the annual survey of state incentives, respondents were asked to note any programs that are designed for state or public agencies. Approximately fifteen new public sector programs were identified. What we discovered, however, is many of the existing programs listed in the database are also available to state agencies. In total, there are ninety-one programs or incentives for public agencies listed in the database. These can

be readily accessed through *DSIRE on Line* through the search form. A search for "Public" under the Sector search form lists these programs.

Add public sector incentives to DSIRE database and website

As discussed above, this task has been successfully completed. The maintenance of this information – like so much of the DSIRE database – remains an ongoing task.

Include new and revised information in the combined DSIRE state regulatory policy, financial incentive, and program summary report

As noted above, the combined state financial and regulatory report was successfully completed in December 2000. This report incorporated all updates accumulated over the contract period.

Additional Items:

Completion of Local government report

This report, which is entitled *Local Government and Community Programs and Incentives for Renewable Energy: National Report* details the important renewable energy activities and incentives of forty-six leading municipalities around the country—from Lakeland, Florida to Los Angeles, California. This report is organized by state and includes municipalities from twenty-two states. Two hundred hard copies of this report were printed under this contract in December. As with the state combined report, it is felt that the most effective distribution method for the report is via *DSIRE on Line* where the report will be made available in January 2001. The report will be downloadable in .pdf format.

Publications

- *The Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy: Local Government and Community Programs and Incentive Report*. Authors: H. Rogers, L. Shirley & E. Larsen, North Carolina Solar Center. Published June 2000. Proceedings of the Solar 2000 Conference, Madison, Wisconsin.
- *National Summary Report on State Financial and Regulatory Incentives for Renewable Energy*. Authors: Chris Larsen and Henry Rogers, North Carolina Solar Center. Published December 2000.
- *Local Government and Community Programs and Incentives for Renewable Energy: National Report*. Author: Susan Gouchoe, North Carolina Solar Center. Published December 2000.

Closing Comments

The DSIRE project continues to be a valuable resource to the states and the renewable energy community. Feedback from many sectors provides reassurance that the time and effort expended on this project is well spent. The Interstate Renewable Energy Council and the North Carolina Solar Center have appreciated the support for this project from the U.S. Department of Energy and we wish to express our deepest gratitude to Joe Galdo and Tina Kaarsberg at the Department for their guidance and advice.

Attachments

1. *National Summary Report on State Financial and Regulatory Incentives for Renewable Energy*
2. *Local Government and Community Programs and Incentives for Renewable Energy: National Report*