

## Smart Energy Solutions for Virginia Kilowatt Ours House Parties

Hosting a house party is a fun way to help build the movement for Smart Energy Solutions. By engaging your friends, family, and neighbors, we can solve global warming and protect our air, water, and mountains.

Hosting a **House Party** is easy to do. There are just a few simple steps to follow, and there are people at the Sierra Club willing to help out. You can have fun while helping fight for a better world.

**Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter**

**804-225-9113 or [michael.town@sierraclub.org](mailto:michael.town@sierraclub.org)**

### **Step 1: Contact the Sierra Club**

Email, call, or write to the Sierra Club if you are interested. Include your name, address, and phone.

### **Step 2: Hosting Kit**

We will mail you a hosting kit that has everything you need to host a house party.

### **Step 3: Guests**

Start inviting folks! Call up friends, family, neighbors, folks you work with, associates in other organizations. Let us know the details of the Party and if you want we will provide you with preprinted invitations that just need your personal touch.

### **Step 4: Materials**

The kit has fact sheets and background sheets. These can be helpful in preparing for the party.

### **Step 5: Pass It On**

Before your guests leave, invite them to become House Party hosts. Pass around a sign up sheet, mail it to 422 E Franklin St, Suite 302, Richmond, VA 23219, and we'll contact them about hosting a party.

### **Step 7: Evaluations**

Let us know how it went! Post notes with your questions, successes and great stories. We set up a forum for you [here](#).

If you would like people from the Sierra Club to come, email the Sierra Club at [michael.town@sierraclub.org](mailto:michael.town@sierraclub.org).

**Sign up to have a House Party now!**

# CONTENTS OF THE KIT

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- ❑ Sample Thank You Note
- ❑ Scripts and Tips
  - Sample “Asks” For Volunteers
  - Frequently Asked Questions
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- ❑ Feedback/Evaluation

## INCLUDED IN THE KIT

- ❑ Invitations
- ❑ Fact Sheets
- ❑ Sign In Sheet
- ❑ Brochures
- ❑ Petition post cards to both Kaine and Dominion
- ❑ Name Tags
- ❑ Thank you notes

## YOU SUPPLY:

- ❑ Guests
- ❑ Your Time
- ❑ Location
- ❑ Food, drinks, cups, plates
- ❑ Pens
- ❑ DVD player and TV
- ❑ **A Good Time**

# **CONTACT INFORMATION SIERRA CLUB**

Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club  
422 E Franklin St, Suite 302  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Email: [michael.town@sierraclub.org](mailto:michael.town@sierraclub.org)  
Phone 804-225-9113  
Fax 804-225-9114

# TIMELINE FOR HOUSE PARTY

## 6 WEEKS BEFORE THE PARTY

Decide on a date for the house party

Request full kit from the Sierra Club

Call or email the Sierra Club to tell us the date and location

## 3-4 WEEKS BEFORE THE PARTY

If you need help with the party, put together a team of your friends and divide up the tasks

Make a guest list, send invitations; and follow-up with phone calls

Ask friends to bring chairs (if needed)

Make a menu for the party. Do you want to have finger foods, a potluck, or a dinner party?

## 1 WEEK BEFORE THE PARTY

Make reminder calls to guest list.

Get the food ready!

Secure chairs (if needed)

Read the issue fact sheets and background information

Contact the Sierra Club ([michael.town@sierraclub.org](mailto:michael.town@sierraclub.org)) with any last minute questions

If you have a team organizing the event, meet or talk with them to review who will do what at the party

## DAY BEFORE THE PARTY

Last minute cooking

## DAY OF THE PARTY

The team arrives early to setup and review the flow of the party- for example, what happens when, who says what...

Setup materials, bumper stickers, buttons, nametags, donation basket, and sign-up sheet on a table accessible to the guests

Setup refreshments

Put up Welcome sign, turn on porch light

## THE PARTY

Welcome guests, allow guests to mingle for 15-30 minutes

Welcome and Introductions (10-20 minutes)

Show Kilowatt Ours- the 38 minute version

Discussion of Smart Energy Solutions

- This is your chance to discuss the Kilowatt Ours and Smart Energy Solutions- try to get everybody involved!

Call to Action (15 Minutes):

- Ask people to volunteer for the Sierra Club (see kit for "sample asks")

# GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR HOUSE PARTY

## GET YOUR “TEAM” TOGETHER

Even a little house party has lots of tasks. A friend, a spouse, a colleague to share the work and bounce ideas off will help you tremendously.

## YOUR MATERIALS

The kit has fact sheets, postcards, and sample invitations. These can be helpful in preparing for the party. The kit can be picked up at the Sierra Club office or we can mail you a kit.

## INVITE PEOPLE!

- ❖ Make up your guest list, set a date, time, and place, then mail your invitations. (Email has a much lower response rate). Consider friends, neighbors, co-workers, family, members of your union, PTA, or book club, and members of your church or synagogue, professional groups, local peace or social justice groups. 12-50 people works best.
- ❖ Hold your event in your home or apartment, a friend’s house, a church hall, community group room; anywhere that is large enough and has good parking. Figure on 1-2 hours. Evenings and weekends are best for working folks.
- ❖ Figure that 1 out of 4 or 5 invited people will attend. We have included invitations: feel free to create your own using the guidelines we have included. Send out the invitations as soon as possible! Follow up your invitations with a phone call a few days later. Remember, a house party is a way to build the movement. You will want to mention that in your invitation.

## SET A VOLUNTEER GOAL – BE AMBITIOUS!

It has been said that successful movements have at least one leader for every ten members. Asking people to volunteer is the first step in building such a movement.

## WE LOVE FOOD!

Hey, this is a party! Music, food and drinks break the ice and put people in a good frame of mind. Veggies and dip, crackers and cheese, water or wine, it’s up to you.

## CALL YOUR GUESTS TO REMIND THEM A WEEK BEFORE

A reminder phone call is always appreciated by busy folks, and can make a BIG difference in attendance at your party.

## ONE DAY TO GO!

**Meet with your “team” the day before to plan who will do what at the party. Make sure you have enough chairs/places for people to sit.**

# DAY OF THE PARTY

## SET THINGS UP

- ❖ Your “team” should arrive early to establish a common understanding of the “flow” of the event, i.e., who does what and when.
- ❖ Set up two tables: one for refreshments, and one for campaign materials including sign up sheet, facts sheets, name tags, and postcards to take action. Be sure you have some pens. Set out a basket or bowl, clearly marked, for contributions on the table.

## PARTY TIME!

Greet your guests as they come in and thank them for coming. If nametags are appropriate, have your guests put them on.

- ❖ **BE SURE EVERYONE SIGNS IN WITH PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES.**
- ❖ **KEEP THE PARTY POSITIVE AND FUN!** People should have fun at the party; and with events around the world that are sometimes depressing, people need to have fun and know that they can make a difference.
- ❖ Let folks mingle and chat for 20-30 minutes after they arrive. People are here because they are your friends and they are interested in solving our energy challenges. They also want to have a good time.
- ❖ Host and Guest Introductions (See attached agenda for details)
- ❖ Show Kilowatt Ours (38 minutes). Let your guests discuss their reactions to the film (10-20 minutes)
- ❖ Call to Action: Ask for volunteers. (See sample “Asks”, included) (15 minutes)
- ❖ Pass around the sign-up sheet again. Ask for two people to volunteer to hold their own house parties; Thank people for coming, wrap up. (5 minutes)
- ❖ Congratulate yourselves!

## AFTER THE PARTY

- Return the kit to the Sierra Club. Include your completed Evaluation form and your Sign-in Sheet.
- Send Thank you notes to guests (cards and sample included)

### **SAMPLE HOUSE PARTY AGENDA**

Socialize  
Welcome  
Guest Introductions  
Kilowatt Ours  
Q&A/Comments  
Ask for Volunteers and House Party Hosts  
Wrap up and Thank yous

# About Invitations

## INVITATION HINTS

Experience shows that only 1 out of 4 or 5 people who are invited to your house party will attend. The response rate is even lower (1 of 10) if you use email only. The most effective way to get good attendance is to mail out invitations, and follow up a week later with a personal phone call. 5 to 7 days before the party, make a second reminder call. It will greatly increase the attendance at your party.

The kit has invitations that are ready for you to write a personal invitation to your friends inviting them to help support Smart Energy Solutions.

- Be sure your invitations include the date, time, and address of the house party.
- Include good directions to your house (a map is very useful). Include your phone number.
- Ask your guests to RSVP so you have an idea of how many people are coming.
- This is a movement building event. Be direct about that.

## Sample Invitation

Dear Friends,

Do you want to learn what you can do about global warming? Do you want to protect our mountains from coal? Do you want to protect our countryside from destructive power lines? Do you want Virginia to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy to cut global warming pollution 2 percent a year to get 80 percent reductions by 2050?

Come find out more about the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club's members and supporters are more than 1.3 million of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

Now the Sierra Club is working for Smart Energy Solutions for Virginia. We want more investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. We want to preserve our mountains and countryside from Dominion's destructive plans for more coal and power lines. Together, we can solve global warming.

Join us for a party to celebrate the Sierra Club's work and to find out more about the Sierra Club's work and Smart Energy Solution campaign.

Where:

When:

What: 10-20 friends, food and beverages, a 20 minute video, discussion of the issues, and a chance to join the movement for Smart Energy Solutions for Virginia. Come enjoy a night dedicated to making the world a little cooler.

# **SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE**

Dear [first name],

Thank you for coming to my house party. The Sierra Club relies on volunteers like you to win victories for the Earth and people. With your help the Sierra Club is proving that smart energy solutions are not only possible, but will create safe and healthy communities. We hope you will continue to support the Smart Energy Solutions campaign by volunteering and spreading the word to your family and friends. If you need further information regarding volunteering, the Sierra Club's programs or hosting a house party, please call \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) at (555) 123-4567. Looking forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Sarah Efficiency and Sally Renewable

# SCRIPTS AND TIPS

House parties should be fun. We have included some “tips” on frequently asked questions, and some sample “scripts” you might want to review for various tasks in doing your party.

## SCRIPTS

### Reminder calls

Hi, this is Sally Renewable, just calling to remind you about our House Party for the Sierra Club’s Smart Energy Solutions on Sunday, December 14 at 7 p.m. The party is at 123 Main Street in Richmond. It will be great fun, and we will watch Kilowatt Ours, a great documentary. If you need directions, give me a call at (804) 555-1234. Looking forward to seeing you, thanks so much.

### Introductions

My name is Jane Smith and I am thrilled that so many of you have come to my house to hear about the Smart Energy Solutions for Virginia campaign of the Sierra Club. Let me tell you why I am volunteering so much of my time for the Sierra Club ...

... when everyday people join together we can make a difference and get Virginia to invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency.  
... with global warming breathing down our necks, Dominion wants to continue down the path of dirty energy, planning new coal fired power plants and destructive power plants.  
...Virginia’s mountains are part of our heritage, and mountain top removal is destroying them at alarming rate.

Why don’t we go around the room and introduce ourselves, say where you are from, and just say a sentence or two about yourself:

- Why the Smart Energy Solutions campaign interests you; or
- What is your favorite way to save energy; or
- The one issue that concerns you the most.

# Sample ASKS For VOLUNTEERS

A very successful sample “ask” is below:

You have just heard about many of the problems and solutions about how we get energy in the South. You may be wondering what you can do to make a change.

- If you do ONE thing, sign a postcard to Governor Kaine and Dominion asking them to adopt Smart Energy solutions.
- If you do TWO things, sign the postcards and commit to coming to a volunteer event of the Sierra Club.
- If you do THREE things, sign the postcards, commit to coming to a volunteer event, and commit to host another house party.
- If you do FOUR things, sign the postcards, write a letter to the editor, commit to coming to a volunteer event, and commit to host another house party.

## ***HOT TIP!***

It is a good idea to seed the crowd with someone that you know is planning on volunteer. It will get people in the mood and there is a feeling that it is ok to volunteer when other people are.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HOUSE PARTY

## **I am not an expert on every issue. What should I do to get ready for the house party?**

- You don't have to be an expert to make a difference. Building relationships is just as important as understanding how the electrical grid works. We don't expect you to be an expert on every issue. What is important to communicate is your commitment to solving global warming. You are a concerned citizen who supports the Sierra Club, not necessarily a policy expert. Fact sheets and background information are in the house party kit. While we have some training for you, please don't feel you have to know everything about the Sierra Club to host a party. To familiarize yourself with questions that might come up, you might want to:
  - Review the info included in your materials.
  - Think about why you support the Sierra Club – write a few paragraphs so you can share your passion and excitement with those who attend the party.
  - If someone asks a question that you do not know the answer to, don't worry about it. The concerned person can contact the website to get further information.

## **How can I keep track of all the questions my guests have concerns about?**

- It's impossible for one person to run the party and also keep track of what's going on. Have a "team" member take notes, so people's questions are answered to the best of your ability.
- Also, if there are funny moments or stories that really move you, your team member can make sure these are jotted down so they can be shared with us and passed on to everyone else.

## MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

The key to a successful house party is to let your enthusiasm and excitement for the Smart Energy Solutions campaign shine through, and to focus on your guests' interests. All of you have gathered in a group to talk to each other about the Smart Energy Solutions campaign.

Get people to say one or two sentences about why they are at your party, what energy solutions are their favorites (windmills, CFL light bulbs, etc.).

Listen to your guests, and then reflect back to them how Smart Energy Solutions would benefit them and their friends. This is not about preaching, but about listening and "facilitating". Keep the group focused and the video will answer most of their questions.

We strongly urge you to have voter registration forms available at your party on the materials table. Even if all your guests are registered to vote, everyone knows somebody who isn't registered. They appreciate having a form that they can give to their family and friends. The center has forms and instructions.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP FOR SCRIPTS AND TIPS . . .**

Please be sure to add YOUR comments and thoughts to your Evaluation Form. The Smart Energy Solutions for Virginia campaign would like to know what worked and did not work for you, so we can pass it along to others! If there are other FAQs which you would like to see addressed, PLEASE let us know.

# FEEDBACK/EVALUATION

Return the Form with the kit to  
Sierra Club  
422 E Franklin St, Ste 302  
Richmond, VA 23219

HOST(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF PARTY \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this form at the end of the house party and send it to us.  
YOUR FEEDBACK IS CRITICAL IN HELPING US IMPROVE OUR FUTURE HOUSE PARTIES!

Facts and Figures:

number of guests \_\_\_\_\_  
number of new volunteers enrolled \_\_\_\_\_  
number of volunteers who helped \_\_\_\_\_  
number of new hosts recruited \_\_\_\_\_

Did you receive enough guidance organizing your house party? \_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

Please explain how it could have been better \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find the campaign materials helpful in conducting your house party?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

What other material would have been helpful? What worked well? Do you have any suggestions or advice for future house party hosts?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any stories or quotations to share with us?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to do another House party for the Smart Energy Solutions campaign or would you be willing to help someone else organize his or her party?

\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

Other comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for hosting the party!