

Group urges WVU to use solar panels

Sierra Student Coalition posts a petition online

TO SIGN the petition online, visit sierrastudentcoalition.org.wvu.edu.

BY AARON HOST

For The Dominion Post

The Sierra Student Coalition is asking WVU to install solar panels on campus by the end of the 2017-'18 academic year.

A petition launched by the Sierra Student Coalition urges WVU to install 50-kilowatt solar panels by April. According to the coalition, a 50-kilowatt panel is on track to supply the demands for a building with energy use — such as the Student Recreation Center, on the Evansdale Campus.

A location for the solar panels has not been determined. David Buch, vice president of the Sierra Student Coalition, said they are “identifying a few different potential sites.”

Buch estimates that the petition has reached more than 250 signatures.

Buch said the Sierra Student Coalition “received a lot of positive feedback” on the petition so far.

But Autumn Long, program director of Solar United Neighbors of West Virginia, said the effort is still in the early stages.

She’s working with students on the campaign.

“Solar saves you money,” Long said, adding that the panels last for decades and would provide a return on the investment by WVU.

Long estimates that a 5-kilowatt array would cost between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

Long said the goal right now is to build support for the campaign before approaching WVU officials. WVU’s Math and Astronomy clubs, along with other or-

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ganizations, already have backed the effort.

WVU Student Government Association (SGA) President Blake Humphrey said the campaign is intriguing. He was approached by Buch and said SGA will help facilitate conversations with university officials.

Traci Knabenshue, sustainability director of Facilities and Services at WVU, said the university is aware of the petition. “We consider all sustainability efforts,” she said.

Knabenshue said talks about the campaign are in the beginning stages.