



Chairmen Roae and Matzie and members of the House Consumer Affairs committee,

Borrego Solar submits this testimony in support of HB 531. HB 531 will enable Pennsylvania residents and businesses to participate in solar market through community solar. Community solar allows renters, condo owners, homeowners with unsuitable rooftops, low- and moderate-income individuals, and individuals that don't want the commitment of rooftop solar to participate in the solar market and achieve savings on their bill. The last part is key. A viable and vibrant community solar market offers subscribers bill savings. The bill savings are justified by the value the projects provide to the state and the grid.

HB 531 is also an economic development tool. Solar is one of the fastest growing industries in the nation. According to the Solar Foundation in the five-year period between 2014 and 2019, solar employment increased 44%, five times faster than job growth in the overall U.S. economy. In Pennsylvania solar jobs remained flat. Pennsylvania can increase the jobs associated with solar through passage of HB 531.

Borrego Solar Systems is a privately held, national solar developer. We have been in business for 40 years, have nearly 400 employees nationwide and have developed and built over 1,000 megawatts of projects similar to what HB 531 would enable. We are the largest community solar developer in Massachusetts and New York, and have built or developed projects in Maryland, Illinois, Minnesota and Oregon, and are actively pursuing other developments in additional states. The projects of this type that we have developed and built across the nation have put billions of dollars into the economy. Our projects will pay over \$500 million in property taxes and hundreds of millions in lease payments over their lifetime. Furthermore, the subscribers to these projects will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in bill savings over the lifetime of their subscriptions. Every landowner that we lease from receives stable and predictable income for the portion of their land that we lease and can go back to farming the land once the project is removed.

Borrego is both a solar developer and a solar construction company. We develop projects from the ground up and take them all the way through operation. We also build projects for other companies. We are not a fly by night company. When a market opens, we set up an office, hire staff, and subcontract with local firms. A perfect example of this is Illinois. The market for community solar opened in 2017, at which point Borrego started hiring. We now have 30 full time staff and continue to grow. Our staff includes developers, engineers and project managers, among others. We are currently building dozens of projects in Illinois. The scope of local firms we have contracts with is broad: on the development side we work with local permit specialists, real estate professionals, engineers, attorneys, among others. Once in construction we need everything from local electrical subcontractors and fencing companies to equipment storage and dumpster rentals. We would expect to see the same level of activity in Pennsylvania.

HB 531 as amended does two main things. It statutorily enables community solar to exist in Pennsylvania and creates the stability the industry needs to open the market. Specifically, HB 531

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Clean Energy Co

March 10, 2020

To: Representatives Roae and Matzie, Chairmen of the House Consumer Affairs Committee

Dear Chairmen Roae and Matzie,

Thank you for providing Clean Energy Co ("CEC") the opportunity to comment on HB-531, the PA Community Solar Access Bill. CEC is a leading Community Solar developer active in 17 states across the country. CEC was instrumental in creating the first-in-the-nation Community Solar project in El Jebel, Colorado in 2010 and developed the first Community Solar projects in CO, CT, KS, MA, MN, NM, NY, SC, TX, VT, WA and MN. We have been an active participant in regulatory proceedings opening and improving Community Solar markets across the country and have connected 87 projects totaling over 119MW of distributed solar generation. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our thoughts on this important legislation.

CEC supports Community Energy's testimony on the important contributions that Community Solar can provide to the Commonwealth in the form of jobs, Borrego, Clearway and Summit Ridge's testimony on the opportunity for Community Solar to bring much-needed private capital and innovation into the Commonwealth to support a decarbonized electric generation future, Clean Choice and Aracadia's testimony on how Community Solar provides Commonwealth citizens with an enhanced customer experience on their homes' and businesses' energy consumption, Turning Point's and Community Energy's testimony on the potential for job growth that Community Solar represents and Clearway's testimony on the important contributions Community Solar can make to cost reduction for grid modernization.

In addition to these many benefits (to say nothing of the myriad health and environmental benefits), a critical benefit that Community Solar is already providing in the various states that have enacted enabling legislation lies in the lifeline that solar providers have been able to extend to family farmers who are struggling to hold on to their way of life, and to the rural communities in which they reside. As in Pennsylvania, small family farms are struggling to make ends meet and preserve their way of life across the United States; and in states where the Community Solar industry operates, providers have proven to be instrumental in empowering many farmers to do so.

CEC and other Community Solar companies are today providing lease payments to family farmers which are enabling the next generation of farmers to farm the land that their families have for generations by providing an additional, predictable revenue stream by "farming" a new crop – solar energy – on a part of their property while also preserving that land for future agricultural use. These payments have helped to stabilize family farms' income in all seasons, provided them the necessary working capital to continue to farm their remaining land and in many cases been instrumental in enabling them to meet their tax obligations, to the benefit of the surrounding community.

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What is critical to understand and acknowledge is that irrespective of whether a Dual-Use Ag solar farm installation is Vegetation-Centric, Energy-Centric or Integrated/Hybrid, they *all* preserve the land for future agricultural use. Many will also improve the land through soil formation over time or provide other important Ecosystem Services to the community, whether through pollination (with the planting of native pollinator vegetation or the use of honey bees), through additional biodiversity Ecosystem Services (through other flora or man-made habitat such as bird and bat boxes) flood control or any number of other Ecosystem Service project designs.

CEC again expresses our gratitude for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HB-531 and urges the Committee to support not just Pennsylvania's decarbonized future but family farms in the Commonwealth through its passage.

Sincerely,



Ed Brolin, VP Policy & Government Affairs
Clean Energy Co