



October 21, 2020

To: Committee Chairman Roae, Chairman Matzie, and Members of the Consumer Affairs Committee

Thank you for giving the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) the opportunity to discuss Community Solar policies in Pennsylvania.

CCSA is a national coalition of businesses and non-profits working together to expand customer choice. Our mission is to empower all American households and businesses that seek home grown energy sources through community solar. We work with customers, utilities, local stakeholders, allies and policymakers to develop and implement best practices that ensure community solar programs provide a win-win-win solution. The solution begins with the customer. Our members are solar industry leaders and are engaged at every step of development, ensuring these best practices are not theoretical but are applied and practiced. We have members headquartered in Pennsylvania, including myself, and others who are interested in investing in our Commonwealth. CCSA submits testimony in support of HB-1970 as a means to grow the renewable portfolio but is opposed to the legislation as an alternative to HB-531 Community Solar legislation.

House Bill 1970

Representative Mizgorski's Local Solar bill will add additional options for utility scale projects in the Commonwealth by allowing for Pennsylvania's Electrical Distribution Companies (EDCs) to financially back large-scale solar projects in the state. Her legislation would promote access to solar energy by the utility executing power purchase agreements with solar developers and passing the renewable energy option on to their customers. Currently, the Commonwealth has similar options available to customers through the retail energy supply market. With both HB-1970 and the retail energy supply market, a customer can choose to pay a premium for renewable energy generation on their electric bill. HB-1970 could encourage in-state development of large scale solar projects rather than purchasing PA solar credits to be used in other states.

However, CCSA would strongly oppose HB-1970 as a community solar program. HB-1970 is not a community solar program and should not be mistaken as a community solar program. Representative Mizgorski's legislation does not allow for cost savings for Pennsylvania consumers and would require customers to pay a premium price for renewable energy generation. There are minimal consumer protections in the legislation, and as a result Pennsylvania consumers could be vulnerable to price increases by the utility. Lastly, this



legislation has no requirements for solar development and would prevent the creation of a competitive market.

Community Solar 101

Community solar will allow the private sector to work in collaboration with our local utilities to provide clean energy to our local communities and reduce costs to customers. Community solar refers to local, third-party owned, solar facilities shared by multiple community subscribers that receive credits on their electric bills for their share of the power produced. Community solar provides homeowners, renters and businesses equal access to the economic benefits of solar generation, regardless of the physical attributes, financial barriers, or property ownership. Today, more than 50% of American households and businesses do not have access to solar due to these common barriers. Community solar provides anyone who pays an electric bill access to solar energy without the need to install a solar system on site. It expands access to solar for all, provides energy choice for customers and diversifies our generation sources with home grown energy. This ultimately builds a strong, distributed, and more resilient electric grid.

Economic Benefits of Community Solar

Representative Kaufer's HB-531, will enable community solar projects in the Commonwealth by removing red tape that is preventing a competitive market and, importantly, this bill will not raise taxes. Furthermore, Kaufer has tirelessly worked to get feedback from industry leaders, the

Electric Distribution Companies, the agricultural community, and other stakeholders to find a solution that works for Pennsylvania. When HB-531 bill passes, Pennsylvania will see a new stream of corporate investments from the solar industry. According to a recent study by Penn State, there are 235 community solar projects in 48 counties ready to drive in \$1.8 billion in economic benefits and create 12,000 jobs as soon as HB-531 passes. Furthermore, the study showed over \$500 million dollars in annual consumer savings at a time when Pennsylvanians need relief.

These shovel-ready projects have already spurred 3 to 4 million dollars in corporate investments, including cash payments to farmers in rural parts of the state. HB531 will drive much-needed tax dollars into our local communities hit hard by volatile markets, population changes, and the economic downturn caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic. These tax dollars, which will be paid by the community solar developers, can help fund schools, lower property tax burdens for seniors, fund critical infrastructure needs for the community, or simply be used to refill local government coffers diminished by the economic shutdown.

Representative Mizgorski's bill will not bring the same level of economic stimulus to the Commonwealth and will provide no consumer relief through cost savings. CCSA takes an all of



the above position on generation and HB-1970 and would encourage the legislature to increase our state's renewable energy generation. However, the legislation should be amended to ensure robust consumer protections, measures to ensure a competitive market, and minimum requirements for solar generation.

CCSA looks forward to working closely with Chairmen Roae and Matzie, Members of the Consumer Protections Committee, and Representative Mizgorski to find a solution to protect consumers and spur more utility scale generation in the Commonwealth. However, we strongly encourage the committee to move on Representative Kaufer's HB-531 now to bring this new economic opportunity to the state of Pennsylvania in 2020. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Ann Elder, Mid-Atlantic Director
Coalition for Community Solar Access