



**Testimony Before the
Pennsylvania House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee
January 16, 2024
Hearing on HB 1842, Community Solar Legislation**

**TESTIMONY BY: Alfred “Buddy” Franklin-Recording Secretary
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local #5**

Pennsylvania Chairman Matzie, Chairman Marshall and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and testify on the position of IBEW Local 5. Our members are excited about the jobs that community solar can bring and our role in providing a highly trained workforce to meet the demand.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Buddy Franklin and I've been a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers for over twenty years. I've served in a number of roles in our union and today serve as the Recording Secretary, covering Pittsburgh, its suburbs and the greater region of Western and Central Pennsylvania. IBEW Local #5 has been training electrical workers in Western Pennsylvania for over 126 years, including proactively training our members in solar / photovoltaic installation work for the better part of the last decade. We're thrilled that this legislation, House Bill 1842, dictates Pennsylvania prevailing wage rates for installations and the investment in safety and reliability.

Community solar will help our existing workforce, but it will also attract new workers. I often work with our existing apprenticeships to search for young people looking to enter a trade and spread the word about the value of these fields. If we pass this legislation and develop these sites, we will be able to provide more opportunities to those that are looking to enter trades, desire to work with their hands, and earn an income that they need as the costs of living continue to rise.

The introduction of a measured and concise solar energy plan will not disrupt the existing types of energy in the state and the many jobs they support – it will have an additive affect. The energy we receive from natural gas, nuclear, and coal will still be our baseload generation for the immediate future and these jobs will remain. Community solar will add to the diversity of our grid while helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and allowing us to maintain grid reliability as we move forward.

Community solar is a perfect mix of cost-efficient, proven renewable policy that we support and will stand with industry to build a lasting, sustainable market. It works in every market that has a well-crafted program, programs that resemble Representative Schweyer's bill. Community solar has worked in every jurisdiction that has set up a robust market. It will work in Pennsylvania and we have the best trained workforce ready to deliver.

Respectfully,

Alfred Franklin

Recording Secretary
IBEW Local 5