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Solar Landscape respectfully offers testimony in support of HB1842, sponsored by Rep. Peter Schweyer. This act provides for the development of community solar facilities and imposes duties on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, electric distribution companies, and subscriber organizations. It also provides for prevailing wage requirements for the construction of community solar facilities.

Solar Landscape has deployed over 400 megawatts of renewable energy projects nationwide and we are eager to bring the benefits of community solar to Pennsylvania.

Founded in 2012, Solar Landscape has become the nation's leader in providing the benefits of solar energy to low- and moderate-income households. Our company specializes in building community solar on commercial/industrial rooftops and has partnerships with commercial/industrial rooftop owners in Illinois, New Jersey, and Maryland.

The growth of our company illustrates how community solar will bring new family-sustaining jobs, investment, and career pathways to the Commonwealth.

We currently employ over 175 employees across the country across business development, policy, construction, engineering, operations, maintenance, among others, and we are on a mission to provide clean energy and savings to low-income communities nationwide. Committed to workforce development in the Commonwealth, we provide job training, certifications, and well-paying jobs in a rapidly growing industry. Our STEP-UP workforce development program was recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy with a Sunny Award Grand Prize for equitable workforce development¹. With the passage of HB1842, we would be able to bring our workforce development initiatives to Pennsylvania, providing economic opportunity to all its citizens.

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¹ <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/2023-sunny-awards-equitable-community-solar#:~:text=Timeline%20%20SETO%20announced%20the%202023%20Sunny%20Awards,and%20of%20funding%20will%20be%20distributed%20in%20November%202023.>

Our community solar projects in New Jersey and Maryland demonstrate how the projects promote consumer choice, increase access, and reduce costs for residents.

Traditionally, the upfront costs of installing solar panels on residential properties have been a barrier for many households, particularly those with limited financial resources. However, community solar projects allow individuals to subscribe to a portion of a shared solar array, eliminating the need for upfront investment and reducing energy costs. By participating in community solar, low- and moderate-income families can access renewable energy at discounted rates, thereby lowering their utility bills and freeing up funds for other essential expenses. This not only promotes energy affordability and financial stability but also helps alleviate energy poverty and disparities in energy access across communities in Pennsylvania.

Utilizing the many millions of square feet of Pennsylvania's available commercial/industrial rooftops for community solar projects will create substantial economic benefits for Pennsylvania businesses.

By using commercial rooftop space for the development of community solar projects, businesses can tap into a new revenue stream and provide renewable energy to the grid. In the past, community solar projects have often been located on the ground -- places such as brownfields, green fields, and farmland -- often miles from where the power is used, leading to increased transmission and distribution costs due to the distance the energy needs to travel. By siting these projects closer to where the energy is used on commercial/industrial rooftops closer to population centers, we are providing more energy with more grid value as it is generated closer to where it will be used, all while preserving greenspaces in the process.

Siting community solar projects on commercial/industrial rooftops in urban areas also expedites the construction process, enabling residents and businesses to take advantage of the benefits sooner.

According to PennEnvironment, Pennsylvania ranks 9th in solar potential nationwide². The combined solar potential of commercial/industrial real estate could generate over 3,000 gigawatt-hours of electricity per year, equivalent to powering nearly 300,000 homes. By using commercial/industrial rooftop space for the development of community solar projects, commercial/industrial real estate owners can tap into a new revenue stream by providing renewable energy to the grid and substantial energy discounts to community members.

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² <https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/center/media-center/new-report-pa-ranks-9th-nationally-for-potential-to-get-solar-power-from-big-box-stores-rooftops/>

Pennsylvania, renowned for its industrial heritage, stands at a crucial juncture where transitioning to sustainable energy solutions is both urgent and advantageous. Implementing community solar projects on commercial/industrial rooftops not only generates clean energy but also generates good jobs, consumer choice and access, provides substantial savings for residents, and advances the state's energy independence.

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