



Village of L'Anse
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To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing you today in my capacity as the Village Manager of L'Anse to express my support for community solar legislation. L'Anse, which also operates its own Municipal Electric Utility, has recently completed our community solar array. I can unequivocally state that it has been a positive for our community. Working in conjunction with the Western U.P. Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), Michigan Technological University, WPPI Energy (our joint action agency/power supplier), our Community Action Agency, Michigan Energy Options, MDARD, and the Michigan Energy Office (now part of EGLE), we worked collaboratively with community members to build a program to help meet our local citizens renewable energy needs, making a difference on climate and in the wallets of our citizens. I receive calls regularly from members of other communities that don't have the freedom to advance projects like ours, because of barriers related to who the utility is that serves their community. If you look, the vast majority of community solar projects occur in municipal or co-op service territories. People should have the freedom to choose to participate in these type of programs if the will in the community is strong enough to move forward.

Community feedback was an important part of the program design here in L'Anse. Community solar benefits come in the form of allowing people to gain savings on their electric bills by using a central site, avoiding problems associated with narrow lot lines in older communities (such as ours), the loss of trees due to siting, or having to make other sacrifices on their property, while providing opportunity to invest in locally produced renewable energy for their own benefit. It was important to our community members that everyone who wanted to participate should have the ability to do so. In response, the L'Anse model included on bill financing options, giving residents flexibility to participate. From this feedback we also built a low-moderate income program in conjunction with EGLE and our community action agency, whereby income qualified participants could get access to panels if they completed or got line to complete a weatherization program (at no cost) to their home. This has given these participants the ability to better meet their bills, lower their energy costs and consumption, and given these participants the ability to make other choices for the benefit of their families. These benefits should exist everywhere in our state.

The L'Anse Community Solar program is Michigan made (U.P. made), utilizing partnerships from higher education (Michigan Tech), local contractors (Peninsular Solar), planning (WUPPDR/MDARD) and designed and built by our local community, for the benefit of our community. This type of model can and should be expanded state wide, so people in other parts of our state can have the freedom to take control of their own energy futures together. As you can see, Community Solar benefits go beyond the cost of a kW of electricity. If you have any further questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at the address or phone number listed above.

Sincerely,



Bob LaFave
Village Manager - L'Anse, Michigan