



Testimony in Support of HB's 4715 & 4716 to Establish Community Solar in Michigan

To Chairman Bellino, Minority Vice-Chair Manoogian and the Members of the House Energy Committee, the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) fully supports the enactment of House Bills 4715 and 4716 sponsored by Representatives Michele Hoytenga and Rachel Hood to establish Community Solar in Michigan.

GLREA is an organization representing solar installers and individuals that support the expansion of solar in Michigan.

As you know, Michigan has the highest utility electric rates in the upper Midwest and the rates keep increasing almost every year. Homeowners and business across Michigan are turning to installing their own solar energy system to save money on their energy expenditures and to promote a cleaner environment. This policy of providing individuals and business the option of installing their own solar energy system has been Michigan law since 2008 and many people have made this choice.

But there are a very large number of individuals and families that can't take up this option of installing their own solar system because they either live in an apartment or a condominium, have a roof on their home that isn't suitable for solar or can't afford to pay the full upfront cost of installing a solar system at their home or business.

The Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) believes that all Michiganders should have the right to access solar energy if they want to.

The solution to removing these barriers is to enact Community Solar in Michigan, where interested people and business could subscribe to a portion of a solar array and receive a credit on their utility bill for their share of the power that is produced. Individuals with limited funds could subscribe to a small number of panels and receive the benefit of lower costing power and over time subscribe to more panels to meet a greater portion of their household electrical energy use.

Community Solar takes the solar option enacted in 2008 and extends it to all people and business throughout Michigan. And very importantly, Community Solar enables low and moderate-income people to fully participate in choosing solar.

By enacting Community Solar you will further develop the market for solar energy, which will attract private sector investment, create a lot of jobs and enable many more people to save money on their monthly energy bills. And of course since solar energy is clean energy, Community Solar will help promote a cleaner environment.

For these reasons, the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) supports these bills and urge you to as well. Thank you for your time and attention.

John Freeman
Executive Director