

Testimony of:

Cheyenne Scott

Before the
Michigan House Committee on Energy
on
House Bills 4715 and 4716

IN SUPPORT

October 27, 2021

Chairperson Bellino and Committee on Energy members:

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on House Bills 4715 and 4716, concerning Community Solar and its benefits. As a resident of Charlevoix, a small city on the Northwestern coast of Northern Michigan and a fulltime student at Michigan Technological University, in Houghton, I represent the communities serviced by the utility companies with the two highest electrical rates in the state according to the Michigan Public Service Commission Utility Rate Books as of October 1st of 2021. Not only does Houghton's provider, Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO), feature an average of 22.31 cents per kWh, but Charlevoix's provider, Consumers Energy, also features an average of 18.66 cents per kWh. With the state average at 17.79 cents per kWh and the national average is 13.90 cents per kWh as of July 21, per the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Michigan is clearly behind in providing its residents with affordable and clean energy. And with UPPCO covering the majority of the Keweenaw Peninsula where MTU is located, and Consumers holding much of Northern Michigan, there is little alternative for electrical providers when companies like these hold such power over what types of energy that power the electrical grid.

Coming from a family where finding money to pay the electric bills has always been a concern, only to move to a collegiate community where the electric rate is even higher, has strained my finances and placed excess burden on myself and my family. Bills 4715 and 4716 would allow for reduction of these rates and for opportunities for low- to moderate-income residents, like my family, to become involved in renewable energy projects and to have a say in where their electricity comes from.

Not only do these bills provide community members the ability to provide sustainable energy to the grid they currently use, but it also provides communities with renters or low- to moderate-income residents access to solar energy by removing typically financial barriers seen in personal home solar, as House Bill 4715 specifically regulates that bill credit rates must allow "access for all customer classes to subscriptions" while also facilitating further community solar facility improvement. The rights of the subscribers are further supported in House Bill 4716, as "any renewable energy credits" gained through the community solar projects developed are "property of the subscriber organization," allowing customers of all classes some say in the distribution and accumulation of renewable energy credits.

I urge you all as the Michigan House of Representatives Council on Energy to do what's right for your constituents across the state and vote yes immediately on House Bills 4715 and 4716 and further them to the House floor. The sooner these bills go into effect, the sooner Michiganders can begin to have

better access to renewable electricity and more reasonable rates to pay for a necessity to human life, with community solar not only encouraging a competitive environment between providers but also supplying bill credits and a more stable electric grid.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cheyenne Scott

clscott@mtu.edu

05775 Loeb Rd
Charlevoix, MI 49720

46545 Main St. Unit #3
Dodgeville, MI 49921