



House Energy Committee

Testimony Re: HB 4715 and HB 4716 October 27, 2021

Thank you Chairman Bellino, Vice Chair Manoogian, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. And thanks to Representative Hood and Representative Hoyenga for their leadership in introducing House Bills 4715 and 4716, respectively.

My name is Cory Connolly, and I'm the vice president of the Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council. We are a trade organization of 140 companies in the advanced energy industry doing business in Michigan. I'm grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of these bills and community solar for Michigan.

Now, before I dive in, I need to get something out of the way: Laura Sherman, our president, went to U of M and I went to Michigan State. If Michigan State wins, you'll be seeing Laura the next time Michigan EIBC testifies. So, let me say with the utmost respect to the committee: Go Green.

With that out of the way, I am joined today by two more Spartans. Our members, Liz Reddington of Pivot Energy and John Kinch of Michigan Energy Options. After my remarks, I will hand it to them to introduce themselves and share their perspectives on the bills being discussed today. But first, I want to share why Michigan EIBC as an organization supports these bills.

The advanced energy industry in Michigan currently employs more than 110,000 Michiganders that are engineers, electricians, carpenters, laborers, and more. Allowing a community solar market to grow in Michigan by passing these bills will create even more jobs. A recent study from Michigan State University (go green) found that community solar can create 18,500 jobs in Michigan over the next five years.

Within our membership are companies working in the solar industry ranging from residential to commercial to utility scale solar. And community solar is a sector that nearly all of our solar members want to work in.

However, almost none of our companies are developing projects in Michigan. That's because current policy makes it virtually impossible to develop community solar projects. Save for a few projects that required incredible effort and collaboration from businesses,



municipalities, and communities, most projects billed as community solar in Michigan aren't what we would consider community solar.

The House bills introduced by Representative Hood and Representative Hoyenga would unlock the community solar market in Michigan, by doing three things:

- 1) Allow for **third-party ownership**. The bill package allows for companies, nonprofits, and individual community members – not just the utilities – to develop and own community solar systems.
- 2) Allow for subscribers to receive **bill credits**. The bill package lets community members that subscribe to or own a share of a third-party owned community solar project to receive bill credits administered on their electric bill.
- 3) Allow **communities and the market to drive adoption**. The bill package allows communities and the market determine how much community solar is built and where. If enough subscribers in a community want community solar, they should be able to get it.

Michigan EIBC supports HB 4715 and HB 4716 because they address the challenges that our companies see in developing community solar projects in Michigan. In doing so, the bills will create jobs, give more communities access to affordable solar energy, and drive economic investment.

I'd like to turn now to two of our members, John Kinch of Michigan Energy Options and Liz Reddington from Pivot Energy.

I can take question now or I'm happy to take questions with John and Liz after their remarks.

I'll hand it to John first.