



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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STATE HOUSE, ROOM 22, BOSTON, MA 02133-1054

JONATHAN HECHT
REPRESENTATIVE
29TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
WATERTOWN • CAMBRIDGE

Committees:
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TEL: (617) 722-2140 • FAX: (617) 722-2339
Jonathan.Hecht@mahouse.gov

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The Honorable Thomas A. Golden, Jr
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
State House, Room 473B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael J. Barrett
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
State House, Room 416
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Golden and Chairman Barrett,

We write respectfully to request a favorable report on H.2871, *An Act regarding net metering for low income and other small facilities*.

The Commonwealth has a policy of encouraging broad participation in solar, but the reality is that some aspects of our laws and regulations discourage the development of certain types of small solar projects, especially those that serve low-income electricity customers. One of the biggest hurdles that small projects face is the net metering caps. This bill seeks to exempt from the caps small Class I net metering projects (under 60kW), including many on schools, libraries, town halls and affordable housing complexes.

Small-scale residential solar systems (under 25kW) are currently exempt from the net metering caps. Unfortunately, most low-income residents do not live in single-family homes with roofs and exposures suited to these systems. Instead, they live in publicly-assisted housing developments, many of which are privately owned. Because these complexes house tens or hundreds of people, their roofs generally have space for systems larger than 25kW but under

60kW. Slightly larger systems are more financially attractive and can offer virtual net metering credits to a greater number of residents.

But these projects need to receive cap allocations. As of June 2019, the net metering caps have been reached in National Grid, WMECO and Unitil territories, meaning that no additional projects above 25kW may net meter in most of central and western Massachusetts. In order to avoid unpredictability and delays in project development, encourage small, distributed projects that bring widespread benefits to the grid and to all ratepayers, and ensure geographic equity in access to solar, H.2871 would simply extend the net metering cap exemption to all public and private Class I net metering projects.

Strengthening our net metering laws to achieve equitable participation in solar, especially for low-income residents, is in keeping with state policy and will produce benefits for our energy sector as well as for our communities and environment. I thank the Committee for its consideration of this important piece of legislation and respectfully request a favorable report.

Best regards,



Jonathan Hecht
State Representative
29th Middlesex