



**Chairman Stefano, Chairwoman Boscola and Members of the Committee:**

Good Morning,

I have spent my adult life in Pennsylvania as a 36-year member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as an advocate for workers, and last June I was fortunate enough to be elected president of the PA Buildings Trade Council. I know the value of hard work and I fight every day to make sure that our building trades members are heard and represented in the halls of government. I champion our unions, support, and foster apprenticeships, and encourage young people to get involved in the trades. I do this because I care about PA and its workers.

In this state, we value hard work and hard workers. We can always do more to provide them with additional opportunities, but an opportunity we are leaving on the table in Pennsylvania is a measured and concise solar energy expansion. The introduction of community solar to this state would create countless jobs across the state - jobs that pay family-sustaining wages for years to come.

Pending legislation in Harrisburg would allow solar panels to be placed on available commercial rooftops, brownfield sites and undeveloped property to allow the energy to be connected to the grid and for Pennsylvanians to opt-in as part of the community solar. For a lot of Pennsylvanians, solar energy is out of reach due to the installation cost and space necessary to house the solar panels. This would allow all of us to opt-in to the use of cost-efficient solar energy with a targeted approach that benefits workers, their families, and their communities.

Data backs this up; Penn State University conducted a study on the potential impact of community solar and the results were impressive. Overall, the construction phase of these facilities in PA would support more than 11,000 jobs and generate \$1.8 billion in economic activity in PA. This economic activity includes income directly from the projects as well as the additional economic activity that occurs as these dollars move through the economy, benefiting everyone. But the benefits of this don't stop after the sites are constructed. Once the projects begin operating, they will continue to support 520 jobs and generate \$83.3 million in economic activity. This extra financial support and job creation opportunity would be enormous for Pennsylvania, as other states are taking advantage of these programs already.

Community solar will help our established workers, but it will also attract new ones. I often work with our existing apprenticeships to search for young people looking to enter a trade and spreading the word about the value of these fields. If we pass this legislation and develop these sites, we will be able to give more opportunities to those that are looking to enter trades, want to work with their hands, and earn the income that they need as costs of living continue to rise.

Additionally, the construction of the community solar sites will engage and invigorate many different sectors of our economy. We will be able to create jobs in engineering, legal services for permitting, the physical labor of construction, as well as advertising for the option to use solar. The Penn State study found that about 90% of the on-site electrical infrastructure costs for the solar sites will be spent within PA. This program would directly benefit our state, not outside corporations, or other states.

Community solar is undoubtedly beneficial for labor: we will have more jobs for folks in this state, and more economic activity in communities that desperately need it.

The introduction of a measured and concise solar energy plan will not disrupt the existing types of energy in PA and the many jobs they support, it will be additive. The energy we receive from natural gas, nuclear, and coal will still be our baseload generation for the immediate future and these jobs will remain. Community solar will add to the diversity of our grid while helping combat greenhouse gas emission and allow us to maintain grid reliability as we move forward.

The Pennsylvania State Building Trades does support and has always supported an all-of-the-above energy policy for PA and community solar is another tool in our toolbelts to help the environment, help create Jobs, spur economic development, and help create a sustainable energy policy for all of Pennsylvania. I urge the legislature to not miss this opportunity and to act to get this legislation done.

Thank you for your time and I very much look forward to our involvement in conversations around solar policy in the Commonwealth.

Robert S. Bair  
Pennsylvania State Building Trades

President,