



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT OF**
SB 176 AAC SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITIES

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Arconti, Vice Chairs Sen. Winfield and Rep. Allie-Brennan, Ranking Members Sen. Formica and Rep. Ferraro, Distinguished Members of the Energy & Technology Committee.

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Senate Bill 176. CTLCV appreciates the Committee's effort to update our **Community Solar program**. However, the very modest changes to solar development caps contained in SB 176 are not nearly enough. The annual cap must be **doubled from 25MW to 50MW** to have a significant impact.

Furthermore, the current cap on our state's **Commercial Solar program** is an unnecessary impediment and should also **be doubled from 50MW to 100MW**.

As a result of these constraints, the majority of proposed commercial and community solar projects get stranded or are undersized vis a vis their potential.

Our state's ability to increase our solar energy production is critical to reaching our clean energy goals under the Global Warming Solutions Act. **The success of our solar programs hinges on removing the barriers to both Commercial and Community solar.**

These constraints were placed on the programs by the legislature. It is now time to update the law to allow these programs to grow. The Energy & Technology committee should fix these programs as soon as possible to unleash the full potential of solar in our state.

According to calculations presented by the *Coalition for Sensible Solar Regulation*, the ratepayer impact of the recommended increase in program caps would be fifteen cents per month for Commercial Solar and two cents per month for Community Solar. These costs pale in comparison to the many economic and environmental benefits.

Commercial Solar allows small, medium, and large business to put solar arrays on their own premises (on a roof or parking lot) which lowers their electric costs and reduces the need to take up forests and farmland.

Commercial and Community solar are also effective tools to advance energy equity. These programs give preference to distressed communities and the Shared Clean Energy Facility Program can help bring clean energy to low- and moderate-income communities. Community solar is intended for homes that cannot have their own panels, and for apartments and rental units that cannot benefit from the other solar incentive programs. It is estimated that 80 percent of Connecticut homes may be unsuited for solar.

CTLCV shares the concerns raised by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) about the siting of additional energy facilities in Environmental Justice Communities that may already be overburdened with affecting facilities. CLF suggests removing subsection (G), which would require at least 40% of the community solar facilities to be located in environmental justice communities. Requiring the facility to be located in the community could also raise costs, as there could be more appropriate cost-effective siting locations outside of environmental justice communities.

Finally, these recommendations speak to the fundamental question about Connecticut's energy strategy. Connecticut should be incentivizing clean, renewable energy sources available to all communities, while at the same time reducing our reliance on large, centralized and out of state resources.

We ask that you amend SB 176 to remove outdated barriers to solar power by increasing the Commercial Solar caps to 100MW, and increasing the Community Solar caps to 50MW.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

CT League of Conservation Voters, 553 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105
ctlcv.org | ctlcv@ctlcv.org | 860-236-5442