THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1842 Session of 2023

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AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION, TECHNOLOGY AND UTILITIES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, MARCH 19, 2024

AN ACT

- Providing for community solar facilities; imposing duties on the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, electric distribution companies and subscriber organizations; and providing for prevailing wage for construction of community solar facilities.
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- 13 FACILITIES.
- 14 SECTION 14. CONSTRUCTION.
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- 16 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- 17 hereby enacts as follows:
- 18 Section 1. Short title.
- This act shall be known and may be cited as the Community
- 20 Solar Act.
- 21 Section 2. Findings and declarations.
- 22 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:
- 23 (1) Growth in solar generation will provide family-
- sustaining jobs and investments in this Commonwealth.
- 25 (2) Programs for community solar generation provide
- 26 customers with additional energy choices and access to
- affordable energy options.
- 28 (3) Community solar programs provide customers,
- 29 including homeowners, renters and businesses, access to the
- 30 benefits of Pennsylvania community solar energy generation

- that is unconstrained by the physical attributes of their

 home or business, including roof space, shading or ownership

 status.
 - (4) In addition to its provision of standard electricity market commodities and services, local solar energy generation can contribute to a more resilient grid and defer the need for costly new transmission and distribution system investment.
 - (5) The intent of this act is to:
 - (i) Allow electric distribution customers of this Commonwealth to subscribe to a portion of a community solar facility and have the result of the subscription be guaranteed savings.
 - (ii) Reasonably allow for the creation, financing, accessibility and operation of third-party-owned community solar generating facilities and enable robust customer participation.
 - (iii) Encourage the development of community solar programs that will facilitate participation by and for accessibility and operation of third-party-owned community solar generating facilities and enable robust customer participation.
 - (iv) Encourage the development of community solar programs that will facilitate participation by and for the benefit of low-income and moderate-income customers and the communities where they live, reduce barriers to participation by renters and small businesses, promote affordability and improve access to basic public utility services.
 - (V) MAXIMIZE THE USE OF FEDERAL MONEY TO PROVIDE FOR <--

- 1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAMS.
- 2 Section 3. Definitions.
- 3 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
- 4 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
- 5 context clearly indicates otherwise:
- 6 "Bill credit." The commission-approved monetary value of
- 7 each kilowatt hour of electricity generated by a community solar
- 8 facility and allocated to a subscriber's monthly bill to offset
- 9 any part of the subscriber's retail electric bill other than
- 10 volumetric or demand-based distribution charges.
- 11 "Brownfield or rooftop community solar facility." A <--
- 12 community solar facility that is primarily located on rooftops-
- 13 or land that is regulated by the department under the following-
- 14 programs:
- 15 (1) The Land Recycling Program.
- 16 (2) The Solid Waste Program.
- 17 (3) The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program.
- 18 "BROWNFIELD." REAL PROPERTY, THE EXPANSION, REDEVELOPMENT OR <--
- 19 REUSE OF WHICH MAY BE COMPLICATED BY THE PRESENCE OR POTENTIAL
- 20 PRESENCE OF A HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE, POLLUTANT OR CONTAMINANT.
- "BROWNFIELD OR ROOFTOP COMMUNITY SOLAR FACILITY." A
- 22 COMMUNITY SOLAR FACILITY THAT IS PRIMARILY LOCATED ON ROOFTOPS
- 23 OR LAND THAT IS A BROWNFIELD.
- 24 "Commission." The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.
- 25 "Community solar facility." A facility that meets all of the
- 26 following criteria:
- 27 (1) Is located within this Commonwealth.
- 28 (2) Is connected to and delivers electricity to a
- 29 distribution system operated by an electric distribution
- 30 company operating in this Commonwealth and in compliance with

- 1 requirements under this act.
- 2 (3) Generates electricity by means of a solar
 3 photovoltaic device with a nameplate capacity rating that
- 4 does not exceed:
- 5 (i) 5,000 kilowatts of alternating current for a 6 facility that is not a brownfield or rooftop community 7 solar facility; and
- 8 (ii) 20,000 kilowatts of alternating current for a
 9 facility that is not a brownfield or rooftop community <-10 solar facility.
- 11 (4) Has no single subscriber who subscribes to more than
 12 50% of the facility capacity in kilowatts or output in
 13 kilowatt hours, except for a master-metered multifamily
 14 residential and OR commercial building.
- 15 (5) No less than 50% of the facility capacity is 16 subscribed by subscriptions of 25 kilowatts or less.
- 17 (6) Credits some or all of the facility-generated 18 electricity to the bills of subscribers.
 - (7) May be located remotely from a subscriber's premises and is not required to provide energy to on-site load.
- 21 (8) Is owned or operated by a community solar organization.
- 23 (9) DELIVERS THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY AND CAPACITY THAT IS <--
- 25 "Community solar organization." As follows:
- 26 (1) An entity that owns or operates a community solar 27 facility and is not required to:
- 28 (i) be an existing retail electric customer;
- 29 (ii) purchase electricity directly from the electric distribution company;

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- 1 (iii) serve electric load independent of the
- 2 community solar facility; or
- 3 (iv) operate under an account held by the same
- 4 individual or legal entity of the subscribers to the
- 5 community solar facility.
- 6 (2) For the purpose of this definition, a community
- 7 solar organization shall not be deemed a public utility
- 8 solely as a result of the organization's ownership or
- 9 operation of a community solar facility.
- 10 "Decommissioning plan." A document on file with a county
- 11 recorder of deeds detailing the measures that will be taken to
- 12 decommission a community solar facility and the amount, form and
- 13 timing of financial assurance.
- 14 "Department." The Department of Environmental Protection of
- 15 the Commonwealth.
- 16 "Electric distribution company." As defined in 66 Pa.C.S. §
- 17 2803 (relating to definitions).
- 18 "Electric distribution customer." A customer that takes
- 19 electric distribution service from an electric distribution
- 20 company, regardless of whether the company is the customer's
- 21 supplier of electric generation or not.
- "Guaranteed savings." Realized savings BY A SUBSCRIBER FROM <--

- 23 A COMMUNITY SOLAR ORGANIZATION MANIFESTED as the difference
- 24 between the cost of a subscription PAID to a community solar
- 25 facility and the credit received ON THE SUBSCRIBER'S ELECTRIC <--
- 26 BILL for the generation attributed to the subscription.
- "Initial and replacement subscribers." Each subscriber to a
- 28 single community solar facility over the life of the facility.
- "LOW-INCOME." A FAMILY INCOME AT OR BELOW 150% OF THE
- 30 POVERTY LINE AS DEFINED IN 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2) (RELATING TO

- 1 DEFINITIONS) BASED ON THE SIZE OF THE FAMILY.
- 2 "Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act." The act of August 15,
- 3 1961 (P.L.987, No.442), known as the Pennsylvania Prevailing
- 4 Wage Act.
- 5 "Public utility." As defined in 66 Pa.C.S. § 102 (relating
- 6 to definitions).
- 7 "Subscriber." An electric distribution customer of an
- 8 electric distribution company who contracts for a subscription
- 9 of a community solar facility interconnected with the customer's
- 10 electric distribution company. The term includes an electric
- 11 distribution customer who owns a portion of a community solar
- 12 facility.
- "Subscriber administrator." An entity that recruits and
- 14 enrolls a subscriber, administers subscriber participation in a
- 15 community solar facility and manages the subscription
- 16 relationship between subscribers and an electric distribution
- 17 company. The term includes a community solar organization. For
- 18 the purpose of this definition, a subscriber administrator shall
- 19 not be considered a public utility solely as a result of the
- 20 subscriber administrator's operation or ownership of a community
- 21 solar facility.
- "Subscription." A contract between a subscriber and a
- 23 subscriber administrator of a community solar facility that
- 24 entitles the subscriber to a bill credit, measured in kilowatt
- 25 hours, and applied against the subscriber's retail electric
- 26 bill.
- "Unsubscribed energy." The output of a community solar
- 28 facility, measured in kilowatt hours, that is not allocated to
- 29 subscribers.
- 30 Section 4. Authorization to own or operate community solar

- 1 facilities.
- 2 A community solar organization or subscriber administrator
- 3 may develop, build, own or operate a community solar facility. A
- 4 community solar organization may serve as a subscriber
- 5 administrator or may contract with a third party to serve as a
- 6 subscriber administrator on behalf of the community solar
- 7 organization. Renewable energy credits that are associated with
- 8 the generation of electricity by a community solar facility
- 9 shall be the property of the community solar organization and
- 10 may be retired or transferred by the community solar
- 11 organization or retired on behalf of the subscribers.
- 12 Section 5. Bill credit for subscribers to community solar
- facilities.
- 14 (a) Credit. -- A subscriber to a community solar facility
- 15 shall receive a monetary bill credit for every kilowatt hour
- 16 produced by the subscriber's subscription. A community solar
- 17 facility that demonstrates all of the following to the
- 18 commission shall have the initial and replacement subscribers of
- 19 the community solar facility receive a bill credit from the date
- 20 the community solar facility is authorized by the commission to
- 21 operate:
- 22 (1) An executed interconnection agreement with an
- 23 electric distribution company obtained in accordance with 52
- 24 Pa. Code Ch. 75 (relating to alternative energy portfolio
- 25 standards).
- 26 (2) Proof of site control.
- 27 (3) The required nonministerial permits.
- 28 (4) Proof that the community solar facility will be at
- least 75% 50% subscribed on the date the community solar
- 30 facility receives permission to operate.

- 1 (5) A signed agreement for a commission-approved workforce development requirement.
- 3 (6) Proof that the community solar facility is 4 constructed or, if not yet constructed, an attestation that 5 the community solar facility will be in compliance with 6 section 14. 13.

7 (7) A COMMUNITY SOLAR ORGANIZATION OR SUBSCRIBER
8 ADMINISTRATOR WILL NOT BILL A SUBSCRIBER FOR SERVICES
9 PROVIDED BY AN ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANY. AN ELECTRIC
10 DISTRIBUTION COMPANY MAY NOT BILL A SUBSCRIBER FOR

SUBSCRIPTION COSTS TO A COMMUNITY SOLAR ORGANIZATION.

- 12 (b) Establishment of credit.--Within 180 days of the
- 13 effective date of this subsection, the commission shall
- 14 establish a bill credit for a public utility that appropriately
- 15 values the energy, capacity and transmission values produced by
- 16 a community solar facility and is not less than the bill credit
- 17 established under 52 Pa. Code § 75.13(e) (relating to general
- 18 provisions). The terms and conditions of receiving the bill
- 19 credit may not limit or inhibit participation of subscribers
- 20 from any rate class.

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- 21 Section 6. Protection for customers.
- 22 (a) Customer protection provisons. -- A community solar
- 23 organization or subscriber administrator shall be subject to the-
- 24 customer protection provisions under 66 Pa.C.S. Chs. 14
- 25 (relating to responsible utility customer protection) and 15-
- 26 (relating to service and facilities) and 52 Pa. Code Ch. 56-
- 27 (relating to standards and billing practices for residential
- 28 public utility service). The commission shall promulgate
- 29 regulations providing for the protection of a residential
- 30 customer who has a subscription with a community solar

- 1 organization or subscriber administrator.
- 2 (b) Standardized customer disclosure form. -- The commission
- 3 shall develop a standardized customer disclosure form IN ENGLISH <--
- 4 AND SPANISH for a residential customer that identifies key
- 5 information that is required to be provided by a subscriber
- 6 administrator to a potential residential subscriber, including
- 7 future costs and benefits of a subscription and the subscriber's
- 8 rights and obligations pertaining to a subscription.
- 9 (c) Subscription costs. -- The subscription costs for a
- 10 subscriber may not exceed the value of the bill credit and may
- 11 not include any upfront or sign-on fees or credit checks. The
- 12 subscription costs shall be nonbasic public utility charges.
- 13 Failure to pay a subscription may result in the loss of a
- 14 subscription but shall not impact public utility services.
- 15 (d) Benefits and costs. -- The commission shall maximize
- 16 benefits and minimize costs to each rate class, notwithstanding
- 17 participation in a community solar program.
- 18 (E) FEES PROHIBITED.--A COMMUNITY SOLAR ORGANIZATION MAY NOT <--
- 19 IMPOSE A TERMINATION OR CANCELLATION FEE ON A SUBSCRIBER.
- 20 (F) ENERGY EFFICIENCY CHARGES. -- A COMMUNITY SOLAR
- 21 ORGANIZATION SHALL BILL A SUBSCRIBER FOR UNIVERSAL SERVICES OR
- 22 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CHARGES AND REMIT THE MONEY COLLECTED TO AN
- 23 ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANY TO PREVENT THE DISTRIBUTION OF
- 24 CHARGES TO CUSTOMERS OF THE ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANY WHO DO
- 25 NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE COMMUNITY SOLAR ORGANIZATION.
- 26 Section 7. Duties of electric distribution companies.
- 27 (a) Report on bill credit. -- On a monthly basis, an electric
- 28 distribution company shall provide to a community solar
- 29 organization or subscriber administrator a report in a
- 30 standardized electronic format indicating the total value of the

- 1 bill credit generated by the community solar facility in the
- 2 prior month, the calculation used to arrive at the total value
- 3 of the bill credit and the amount of the bill credit applied to
- 4 each subscriber.
- 5 (b) Application of bill credit. -- An electric distribution
- 6 company shall apply a bill credit to a subscriber's next monthly
- 7 electric bill for the proportional output of a community solar
- 8 facility attributable to the subscriber. Excess credits on a
- 9 subscriber's bill shall roll over from month to month. An
- 10 electric distribution company shall automatically apply excess
- 11 credits to the final electric bill when a subscription is
- 12 terminated for any cause.
- 13 (c) Transferability. -- An electric distribution company shall
- 14 permit the transferability and portability of subscriptions if a
- 15 subscriber relocates within the same electric distribution
- 16 company territory.
- 17 Section 8. Compensation and cost recovery for electric
- distribution companies.
- 19 (a) Compensation. -- A community solar organization shall
- 20 compensate an electric distribution company for the electric
- 21 distribution company's reasonable costs of interconnection of a
- 22 community solar facility.
- 23 (b) Cost recovery. -- An electric distribution company may
- 24 recover reasonable costs from each subscriber ORGANIZATION,
- 25 subject to approval by the commission, to administer a community
- 26 solar program within the electric distribution company's service
- 27 territory of a community solar facility. The Commonwealth shall
- 28 maximize Federal and State funds for energy assistance, clean
- 29 energy deployment or any other applicable funding to minimize
- 30 the cost recovery impact on each subscriber.

- 1 Section 9. Interconnection standards for community solar
- 2 facilities.
- 3 (a) Applications.--Beginning on the effective date of this
- 4 subsection, an electric distribution company shall have the
- 5 following duties:
- 6 (1) Accept interconnection applications for community
- 7 solar facilities on a nondiscriminatory basis and study the
- 8 impact of interconnecting the facilities to the grid using
- 9 the current commission-approved interconnection rules and
- 10 tariffs and in accordance with best practices.
- 11 (2) Include, in an interconnection application for
- 12 community solar facilities, proof of site control A COMMUNITY <--
- 13 SOLAR FACILITY, PROOF OF SITE CONTROL BY THE COMMUNITY SOLAR
- 14 FACILITY for the purposes of the study under paragraph (1).
- 15 (b) Interconnection working group. -- Within 90 days of the
- 16 effective date of this subsection, the commission shall
- 17 establish an interconnection working group between electric
- 18 distribution companies and stakeholders with oversight from
- 19 commission staff. The interconnection working group shall review
- 20 and recommend changes to policies, processes, tariffs, rules or
- 21 standards associated with the interconnection of community solar
- 22 facilities with the goal of transparency, accuracy and
- 23 efficiency to support the purposes of this act. The
- 24 interconnection working group shall submit a report to the
- 25 commission of the recommended changes within 270 days of the
- 26 effective date of this subsection. Based on the recommended
- 27 changes in the report, the commission shall adopt the changes in
- 28 the State jurisdictional interconnection rules as the commission
- 29 deems necessary or appropriate.
- 30 (c) Administrative fees. -- The commission may impose an

- 1 administrative fee on an initial interconnection application for
- 2 community solar facilities under subsection (a). The commission
- 3 may impose a fee equivalent to up to 5% of the electric
- 4 distribution company's initial interconnection application fee.
- 5 The commission may use fees collected under this subsection for
- 6 the administrative costs directly associated with this act.
- 7 Section 10. Unsubscribed energy.
- 8 An electric distribution company shall purchase bill credits <--

- 9 UNSUBSCRIBED ENERGY from a community solar facility at the
- 10 electric distribution company's wholesale energy cost as
- 11 approved DETERMINED by the commission. To offset real or <--
- 12 perceived costs, an electric distribution company shall sell
- 13 unsubscribed energy to PJM Interconnection, L.L.C., regional
- 14 transmission organization (PJM) or its successor service
- 15 territory markets or otherwise decrease energy purchases.
- 16 Section 11. Customer participation in community solar programs.
- 17 (a) Participation in programs. -- No later than one year after <--
- 18 the effective date of this subsection, the commission shall
- 19 promulgate THE COMMISSION SHALL PROMULGATE PERMANENT regulations <--
- 20 to enable participation in community solar programs by each
- 21 customer class and economic group IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF <--
- 22 THIS COMMONWEALTH.
- 23 (b) Temporary regulations. -- In order to facilitate the
- 24 prompt implementation of this section, the commission and
- 25 department may promulgate temporary regulations. The temporary
- 26 regulations shall expire no later than two years following the
- 27 date of publication of the temporary regulations FOLLOWING THE <--
- 28 DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE PERMANENT REGULATIONS UNDER
- 29 SUBSECTION (A) in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. The temporary
- 30 regulations shall not be subject to any of the following:

- 1 (1) Section 612 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177,
- No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929.
- 3 (2) Sections 201, 202, 203, 204 and 205 of the act of
- 4 July 31, 1968 (P.L.769, No.240), referred to as the
- 5 Commonwealth Documents Law.
- 6 (3) Sections 204(b) and 301(10) of the act of October
- 7 15, 1980 (P.L.950, No.164), known as the Commonwealth
- 8 Attorneys Act.
- 9 (4) The act of June 25, 1982 (P.L.633, No.181), known as
- 10 the Regulatory Review Act.
- 11 (c) Expiration. -- The authority of the commission and
- 12 department to promulgate temporary regulations under subsection
- 13 (b) shall expire six months after the effective date of this
- 14 subsection. Regulations promulgated by the commission and
- 15 department after six months from the effective date of this-
- 16 subsection shall be promulgated as provided by law. SHALL NOT <--
- 17 EXPIRE UNTIL THE COMMISSION PROMULGATES THE PERMANENT
- 18 REGULATIONS UNDER SUBSECTION (A).
- 19 (d) Contents. -- The temporary regulations under subsection
- 20 (b) shall meet all of the following criteria:
- 21 (1) Be based on consideration of formal and informal
- input from all stakeholders.
- 23 (2) Establish requirements that ensure access to
- 24 programs and equitable opportunities for participation for
- 25 residential and small commercial customer classes.
- 26 (3) Establish a registration process for community solar
- 27 organizations.
- 28 (4) Address the reasonable enforcement of minimum
- 29 subscription requirements for a community solar facility.
- 30 (e) Low-income customers.--The commission, in collaboration

- 1 with the Office of Consumer Advocate, electric distribution
- 2 companies, community solar organizations and low-income
- 3 stakeholders, may promulgate regulations adopting mechanisms to
- 4 increase participation by low-income customers in community
- 5 solar programs. The commission shall increase participation by
- 6 low-income customers in community solar programs in a manner
- 7 that allows the commission to use available Federal funds to do
- 8 all of the following:
- 9 (1) Deliver larger guaranteed savings to income
- 10 qualified households than those households that would receive
- 11 guaranteed savings without the Federal funds.
- 12 (2) Maximize State energy assistance programs.
- 13 Section 12. Location of multiple community solar facilities.
- 14 The commission shall promulgate regulations establishing
- 15 limitations on the location of multiple community solar
- 16 facilities in close proximity. The regulations shall meet all of
- 17 the following criteria:
- 18 (1) Prohibit an entity or affiliated entity under common
- 19 control from developing, owning or operating more than one
- 20 community solar facility on the same parcel or contiguous
- 21 parcels of land.
- 22 (2) Authorize a brownfield or rooftop community solar
- facility to be sited on contiguous parcels if the total
- brownfield or rooftop community solar facility capacity on
- 25 all contiguous parcels does not exceed the limits established
- 26 by the commission.
- 27 Section 13. Decommissioning, recycling and photovoltaic panel <--
- 28 <u>removal requirements.</u>
- 29 A subscriber organization shall have the duty of
- 30 decommissioning a community solar facility, including the

- 1 removal, potential reuse and recycling of panels and the
- 2 remediation of the site at the end of the useful life of the
- 3 facility, and to file a decommissioning plan with the county
- 4 recorder of deeds.
- 5 Section 14 13. Prevailing wage for construction of community

- 6 solar facilities.
- 7 (a) Prevailing wage. -- A community solar facility for which a
- 8 bill credit is sought and awarded to a subscriber under this act
- 9 shall be deemed to meet each of the minimum requirements
- 10 necessary to apply the wage and benefit rates and related
- 11 certification of payroll records required under the
- 12 Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act. A community solar organization
- 13 and each of the organization's agents, contractors and
- 14 subcontractors shall comply with the Pennsylvania Prevailing
- 15 Wage Act as attested under section 5 for work undertaken at the
- 16 community solar facility in which a bill credit for a subscriber
- 17 is sought and awarded.
- 18 (b) Violations. -- The Department of Labor and Industry shall
- 19 enforce this section and apply the same administration and
- 20 enforcement applicable under the requirements of the
- 21 Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act to ensure compliance. In
- 22 addition to enforcement authorized under the Pennsylvania
- 23 Prevailing Wage Act, if the Department of Labor and Industry
- 24 determines that the community solar organization intentionally
- 25 failed to pay prevailing wage rates or benefit rates in
- 26 violation of section 11(h) of the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage
- 27 Act for work specified under subsection (a), the community solar
- 28 organization or the organization's agents, contractors and
- 29 subcontractors shall pay a fine equivalent to 10% of the value
- 30 of the bill credit multiplied by the estimated 25-year

- 1 production of the community solar facility.
- 2 SECTION 14. CONSTRUCTION.
- 3 NOTHING IN THIS ACT SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO PERMIT RECOVERY OF

- 4 DIRECT OR INDIRECT COSTS RELATED TO COMMUNITY SOLAR FACILITIES
- 5 FROM RATEPAYERS OF AN ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION COMPANY THAT ARE NOT
- 6 SUBSCRIBERS. THE COMMISSION SHALL MAXIMIZE BENEFITS AND MINIMIZE
- 7 COSTS TO ALL RATE CLASSES, REGARDLESS OF PARTICIPATION IN A
- 8 COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM.
- 9 Section 15. Effective date.
- 10 This act shall take effect in 60 days.