



To: Chair Laughlin and the members of the Senate Majority Policy Committee

Thank you for giving Summit Ridge Energy the opportunity to submit comments concerning Energy Access and Affordability in the Commonwealth. Summit Ridge Energy (SRE) is the nation's leading long-term owner-operator of community solar assets. Our team develops and acquires small to medium sized solar energy and battery storage facilities. In fact, we own the largest community solar project in the nation, which is proudly sited on a large commercial roof. To date, SRE has deployed over \$850mm in capital and we own over 100 operating solar and storage facilities across the country. We are headquartered in Arlington, VA with over 100 employees working across offices in Illinois, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Summit Ridge Energy is also a proud member of the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA), who actively works with customers, utilities, local stakeholders, allies, and policymakers to develop and implement best practices that ensure community solar programs provide a win-win solution for the Commonwealth.

The Keystone State is rich with tradition and justified pride in our energy generation. Coal was first mined in 1775 and Pittsburgh was coined the "Steel City." During much of the 1800s, Pennsylvania's economy was driven sharply by mining expansion, railroads, iron and steel production, and manufacturing. After the discovery of "rock oil," Pennsylvania was at the forefront of making the U.S. the largest oil producing country in the world for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1878, the Haymaker brothers discovered a natural gas field near Pittsburgh, stating "Natural Gas is King!" This history points to how and why the Commonwealth holds the title of the second largest energy exporter in the United States.

Embracing and expanding on our all the above energy policy is critical as we look to the future. The Commonwealth has opportunities to onshore manufacturing jobs, increase our exports and further diversify our energy generation to drive cost savings to our consumers. Maximizing opportunities to form public-private partnerships for grid infrastructure investments will also lower costs to consumers and create a more resilient grid.

Specifically, the Commonwealth should consider legislative measures that expand on state energy tax credits and seek opportunities to maximize federal investments. The state should also look to create new energy markets in renewable energy such as Community Solar. Specifically, investing in distributed resources will allow the state to bring energy generation closer to consumption, provide significant economic benefits, and allow for additional transmission of generation to neighboring states in the PJM region.

Looking to policies that provide guaranteed savings to Pennsylvania consumers is necessary to relieve recent energy rate hikes and pending increases in front of the Commission. Legislation considered in prior sessions will spur new jobs, new tax revenue, and new economic benefits to the state, anchoring our future as a global energy leader. According to an analysis from Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences' Center for Economic and Community Development the construction of new community solar facilities in the commonwealth would generate an estimated \$1.8 billion in economic impact, create over \$793 million in labor income, and support 12,000 total jobs in various sectors across Pennsylvania. The study analyzed 235 planned community solar projects across 48 counties which can move ahead if community solar legislation passes the General Assembly. Once operating, Penn State research projected that these facilities would generate over \$83 million in economic output annually and generate an additional \$575,000 in annual real property taxes for 48 rural and urban counties. Report



author Tim Kelsey of Penn State's Center for Economic and Community Development observed that "These projects will not be confined to just one region, but rather will be spread across broad swaths of the state, offering counties the potential to capture jobs and tax revenues in their own local economies." The Commonwealth would also see a 75% increase in local solar jobs, paying family sustaining wages. This will create \$1.06 billion in economic earnings for Pennsylvanians. Many of the new solar jobs created provide opportunities to develop a pipeline of innovative and skilled labor in rural and urban communities alike, allowing the Commonwealth to rethink and reshape economic development through emerging technologies. Additionally, Pennsylvania Trade Unions have received over 2 million dollars to build a solar training facility in Western Pennsylvania to ensure skilled workforce is readily available to build out this new economic driver.

Significant investments have already been made in the Commonwealth from corporate and small business interests looking to springboard the state into a 21st century global leader. In community solar alone, over 15 million dollars have been spent throughout the state in the past four years, including cash payments to farmers, landowners, non-profit organizations, and building owners. These dollars can help fund schools, lower property tax burdens for seniors, fund critical infrastructure needs for the community, emergency services or other priorities deemed by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).

If Pennsylvania were an independent country, it would be the 18th largest economy in the world and by maximizing on federal tax credits and commitments to American manufacturing, the Commonwealth is well poised to improve our standing. Diversification in generation, attracting manufacturing jobs, and seeking more ways to electrify will lower costs to our consumers while building a stronger, lower cost, and more resilient electric grid. Summit Ridge Energy looks forward to the opportunity to work with Chairman Laughlin and all members of the Senate Majority Policy Committee to bring this new economic opportunity to our state and save consumers money.

Sincerely,

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