



June 2, 2015

Senator Benjamin Downing  
Representative Thomas Golden  
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy

Dear Chairman Downing, Chairman Golden:

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Social Justice and the Green Justice Coalition (GJC), of which we are a member. The Coalition for Social Justice is a grassroots organization in Southeastern Massachusetts dedicated to building a movement for progressive social change, rooted in low-income communities and communities of color that have been excluded from the economic benefits of the current system. We write to ask the legislature to lift the net metering cap and support community shared solar. Of the bills heard today, we strongly support S1770 and H2852, *An act relative to net metering, community shared solar and energy storage*. We also support a policy framework submitted by the Acadia Center which we believe is a fair way to grow solar equitably and swiftly.

Southeastern Massachusetts is at the heart of the state's energy transition with New England's largest coal-fired power plant, Brayton Point set for closure. We believe solar, along with efficiency and other clean energy, must play an increasing part of our energy mix in order to provide area residents with clean power, clean air and to stabilize our utility bills. Community solar in particular is critical for renters and people of modest means. 65% of housing units in Fall River are rental units, making the ability to buy into off-site solar critical.

Our region is already doing great work with solar. In New Bedford, solar panels on a public high school save the public's budget. In Mattapoisett, a shared solar garden brings access to those who can't site solar on their roofs. As a young entrepreneur, Fall City Councilor Jasiel Correia II has led the Urban Solar Initiative's work to Solarize Fall River. We should grow these successes by removing all barriers to solar, shifting our energy mix away from fossil fuels and ensuring all communities receive the benefits of the Commonwealth's clean energy programs.

Sincerely,

Debbie Fastino  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Social Justice