



June 2, 2015

Senator Benjamin Downing and Representative Thomas Golden  
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

**RE: S-1770/H-2852, "An Act Relative to Net Metering, Community Shared Solar and Energy Storage"**

Dear Chairmen Downing and Golden, and Members of the Joint Committee,

As the Executive Director of the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation (CSNDC) and the Board Chair of the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), I welcome this opportunity to testify in support of S-1770/H-2852, "An Act Relative to Net Metering, Community Shared Solar and Energy Storage." This bill lifts net metering caps to enable our Commonwealth to continue achieving its strong progress towards a goal of 1,600 megawatts (MW) of solar by 2020, while also ensuring that all communities, including low-income communities, can share in the benefits of solar for years to come.

My organization, CSNDC, has worked in the Codman Square and Four Corners neighborhoods of Dorchester since 1981 to create sustainable and affordable housing opportunities, and to promote financial and economic stability, for the low-income urban residents and businesses we serve. We currently own and manage 871 units of affordable housing and serve over 2,600 residents across our programmatic areas, ranging from jobs to housing to economic development.

In recent years, our efforts have increasingly focused on clean energy and sustainability. CSNDC is currently developing Boston's first Eco-Innovation District in Codman Square, creating a new neighborhood-scale model for green and equitable development that drives real quality of life improvements for historically underserved, low-income urban residents. As part of this award-winning effort, we are pursuing a local Community Shared Solar project to reduce fossil fuel consumption and energy costs, promote economic development, and help provide residents in low-income neighborhoods with the same opportunity that everyone should be provided with – clean sources of energy, at a reasonable price, in an equitable fashion.

CSNDC supports the provisions in S-1770/H-2852 that will enable Community Shared Solar to flourish. Of particular note, we are encouraged that the bill eliminates property taxes for Community Shared Solar projects, putting those projects on a level playing field with residential solar projects. Only about 20 percent of homes in Massachusetts have appropriate roofs for solar, and the low-income populations

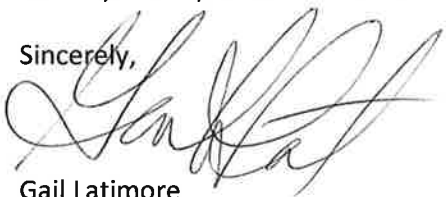
CSNDC and our partner CDC's serve often face additional barriers to accessing solar because they lack financial resources or do not own their homes. Community Shared Solar and virtual net metering are critical to ensuring that all populations in Massachusetts have equitable access to solar and its benefits.

By pursuing Community Shared Solar, CSNDC and our partner CDC's across the Commonwealth can green our affordable housing and commercial real estate portfolios, lower energy and utility bills for ourselves and the residents and small businesses we serve, and play a critical role in reducing our Commonwealth's greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. Ensuring that populations that have historically faced barriers to solar can purchase affordable clean energy from Community Shared Solar projects will not only provide a positive financial impact for the low-income communities that need it the most – it will also create incentives for additional solar projects that will help the Commonwealth meet and exceed its 1,600 MW solar goal.

CSNDC also supports principles for reform articulated in the Next Generation Solar Policy Framework for Massachusetts. Of particular note, we believe that solar policy must maintain or expand equitable access to solar on fair terms, including for renters and others who cannot site solar on their roofs; advance a fair and equitable long-term utility regulatory framework that supports solar, energy efficiency, storage, electric vehicles, and other distributed energy resources, and appropriately protects low-income customers from minimum billing that disproportionately impacts them; and informs and empowers consumers to make economically and environmentally smart energy decisions. While we support S-1770/H-2852 as written, we also encourage legislators to incorporate the broader Framework into the bill to provide sustainable solar policy solutions for the long term.

With your partnership and support, we can ensure that Community Shared Solar delivers equitable benefits for the low-income communities we serve by reducing energy costs, thus helping residents stay in place and avoiding displacement. CSNDC looks forward to working with our partners and the legislature to enact solar policies that provide broadly shared benefits to low-income communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gail Latimore

Executive Director

Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation

cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy  
Congressman Mike Capuano  
Sen. Linda Darcena Forry  
Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz  
Rep. Russell Holmes  
Rep. Daniel Hunt  
Rep. Frank Smizik

Secretary of Energy Matthew Beaton  
Undersecretary of Energy Ned Bartlett  
Commissioner Judith Judson, Department of Energy Resources  
Dwayne Breger, Director, Renewables Division, Department of Energy Resources  
Mayor Marty Walsh  
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City Councilor Michelle Wu  
Cindi Luppi, Clean Water Action  
Lynn Benander, Co-op Power  
Veronica Eady, Conservation Law Foundation  
Nancy Goodman, Environmental League of Massachusetts  
Joe Kriesberg, Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations  
Andre LeRoux, Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance  
Mark Draisen, Metropolitan Area Planning Council