



June 2, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Downing, Chairman Golden:

I write on behalf of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts and the Green Justice Coalition (GJC), of which we are a member. Neighbor to Neighbor is a progressive organization of working class, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic people working together to build political and economic power to improve the quality of lives in our communities, and we have chapters in Western Massachusetts, Central Massachusetts and on the North Shore. We are here today 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*.

Our power grid is changing and we know our communities must be part of the transition or be left behind. At Neighbor to Neighbor we see distributed generation like solar as a means of distributing not only energy but also economic opportunity and wellbeing. We have seen the benefits of solar in communities like Worcester, where the Dismas House, a service provider helping prisoners reenter society, is using utility bill savings to help fund their programs.

In Western MA, we have fought to end coal-burning at the Mt. Tom and we are working with the City of Holyoke, the state and the municipal utility to advance solar. In Worcester and Lynn, our members want solar energy but the net metering cap is endangering their vision of resilient, clean and affordable communities. Many members are renters or low-income people and need shared solar and virtual net metering in order to make clean energy work for their communities. Lifting the cap is critical and urgent, and we also want to ensure that our state's solar policies encourage projects that will benefit the neighborhoods in which our members reside.

We are here to support the growth of clean energy and in turn we ask the state to respond to our communities by ensuring we have access to solar power and that our transition from fossil fuels can continue without delay.

Sincerely,

Maria Elena Letona  
Executive Director  
Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts