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Thank you, Chairman Godshall and members of the House Consumer Affairs Committee, for receiving and considering these comments. My name is Justina Wasicek, Co-Chair of Energy Issues for the PA Sierra Club, which has 24,000 members in Pennsylvania.

The Committee has a great opportunity to "hit a triple" in approving **HB 1580**: it keeps and grows jobs right here in Pennsylvania, **2)** it is low-risk, only providing a temporary bump, not changing the overall goals of the AEPS, and **3)** it helps us to improve our air and water quality by reducing our reliance on polluting sources of energy.

The advantages to House Bill 1580 are recognized by the 113 co-sponsors who have signed on to Rep. Ross's Solar Jobs Bill. HB 1580 is vital to protecting solar jobs and helping the environment in Pennsylvania.

Let's keep the jobs that the solar industry has created here. Pennsylvania ranks fourth in the U.S. in terms of solar jobs. In 2010, we had 6700 self-reported solar jobs. These are well paying and a boon to the economy. In 2010, the rate of solar job growth in Pennsylvania was the second fastest in the country.

Critics have said that solar was not a viable option, yet PASEIA reports that there are now over 3,700 registered solar systems statewide, and Pennsylvania has 7.1 Megawatts of installed solar energy capacity. There are over 600 solar installers registered with DEP. However, the livelihood of these workers is now at serious risk; already, the number of solar jobs reported in PA for 2011 is estimated at 4700 jobs. Also at risk are the hundreds of solar projects that are ready to go, but whose developers need confidence in a reliable market for solar credits, so that they can attract financing.

The growth of the solar industry in Pennsylvania far exceeded the expectations that governed the standards under the Alternative Energy Portfolio standards Act. Under the AEPS, Pennsylvania utilities are only required to buy 0.5 percent of their total electricity supplied from solar by the year 2021.

Our supply of solar power is now more than the required demand—in fact, the supply is 4 times more than the amount scheduled to be purchased by utilities under the AEPS. To make matters worse for PA job prospects, our neighboring states have higher requirements for the purchase of solar power: for instance, Maryland's solar requirement is 0.1% for 2012 (twice PA's current solar requirement for this year). HB 1580 would make PA competitive with Maryland by increasing the PA solar requirement to 0.15% for 2012-2013. We need HB 1580 in order to bring Pennsylvania's market for solar energy renewable credits (SRECS) in line with our neighboring states, to keep the jobs we have created here. It

would be a needless waste of the programs and incentives we have successfully instituted, if we allow the PA markets to collapse and these companies move out of state.

The supply of solar power has so exceeded the AEPS requirement that the price for the solar credits has fallen drastically. Without a reliable market for solar credits, financing for continuing and new projects becomes much harder to obtain. The solution offered by HB 1580 is simple, **effective**, and low risk, HB 1580 would incrementally increase the percentage of solar required to be purchased by utilities over the next three years, while still not exceeding the amount scheduled to be purchased at the end of that period. Then the solar share requirement would resume the scheduled percentages already set by the existing AEPS. No overall change is made to the end goals of the AEPS, but this short term "bump" in the requirements would close the gap between the growth in the solar industry and the scheduled solar share required by the AEPS. HB 1580 would allow solar companies and their jobs to stay in Pennsylvania – along with all the associated infrastructure, markets and ancillary services that also benefit from these solar companies. Increasing the AEPS requirement will protect jobs and help us to create new ones.

Finally, there is an important environmental advantage to keeping and growing the solar industry in Pennsylvania. Using clean, renewable solar energy reduces our reliance on dirtier sources of energy. Historically, there have been government incentives for other energy industries in the US. In September 2011, Pfund and Healey published a documentation of national energy incentives called "What Would Jefferson Do? : The Historical Role of Federal Subsidies in Shaping America's Energy Future". They discuss a variety of government incentives that the coal industry has received, from specialized tax treatment of income as royalty payments, resulting in lower capital tax gains rate (worth \$1.5 Billion from 2000-2009), to state-sponsored geological surveys, to infrastructure support that facilitated extraction.

In regard to nuclear power, the nuclear industry received huge incentives when the Price- Andersen Act provided federal indemnification of utilities in the event of nuclear accidents. Nuclear power has been and continues to be subsidized. The Union of Concerned Scientists points out that nuclear power has been subsidized with tax incentives, loan guarantees, and liability-shifting to the public sector. The UCS states that ongoing subsidies range from 13 to 80 percent of the value of the power produced. On a national basis, Pfund and Healey found that "nuclear subsidies accounted for more than one percent of the federal budget over the industry's first 15 years", and noted that "in inflation adjusted dollars, nuclear spending averaged \$3.3 billion over the first 15 years of subsidy life, oil and gas subsidies averaged \$1.8 billion, while renewable averaged less than \$0.4 billion." As the authors note, this "clearly demonstrates that federal incentives for early fossil fuel production and the nuclear industry were much more robust than the support provided to renewables today."

Government has in the past encouraged and facilitated fossil fuel industries. Now, however, it has become clear that reliance on fossil fuels harms the public health and our environment. Coal-fired power plants emit mercury and other pollutants into our air, washing into our streams and rivers, tainting fish, and ending up in our bodies. Mercury pollution damages our brains and nervous systems, and it is especially dangerous for pregnant women and young children, Mercury exposure can cause

developmental problem and learning disabilities. Coal-fired power plants emit a variety of pollutants, which contribute to smog and worsen breathing problems like asthma, especially in young children.

Clearly, older energy industries like coal and nuclear have not been left to fight it out in the marketplace in the decades of their early development. Many of their costs have been externalized and absorbed by government to promote these energy sources.

We have now experienced reactor failures at Three Mile Island and Fukushima, highlighting the risks to the people and to the water, land, and air around these plants. Nuclear waste has no permanent safe disposal method and it lasts for thousands of years.

Older fuel sources such as nuclear and coal have received government subsidies and support, that externalize their true cost of producing energy. They also pose serious problems to the public health and environment. One way to reduce these risks is to promote safe and healthy sources of energy, like solar. (As Sierra Club has pointed out before, asthma attacks are not triggered by solar panels.)

This is your opportunity to keep a clean, healthy, safe source of energy in Pennsylvania. Now is the time to protect **solar jobs** and the environment, with the very conservative action of a temporary bump to the AEPS requirements. PA Sierra Club asks you to pass **HB 1580** out of committee.