



House Consumer Affairs Committee
Chairman Brad Roae and Chairman Robert Matzie
Proponent Testimony on HB 1970
Testimony of Becky Campbell
Manager of Government Affairs, First Solar, Inc.

October 21, 2020

Chairman Roae, Chairman Matzie Hoops, and Members of the House Consumer Affairs Committee, my name is Becky Campbell and I'm the Manager of Government Affairs at First Solar. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as a **proponent to Pennsylvania House Bill 1970**.

Born in Ohio in 1999, and headquartered in Arizona, First Solar powers communities, innovation, and prosperity with cleaner and more affordable solar technology designed and manufactured in America. We make the most of every day so that Americans are able to make the most of theirs. We are America's Solar Company.

First Solar is America's largest solar manufacturing company. With the biggest solar manufacturing footprint in the United States and the Western Hemisphere, we are the only American solar manufacturer to have shipped over 25 gigawatts (GW) of photovoltaic (PV) modules. We are also the only American company among the world's ten largest solar manufacturers, the others being primarily Asia-based. We employ more than 2,500 associates throughout the U.S., including several right here in Pennsylvania – myself included.

Our company is one of the largest and most experienced PV solar developers in the world. First Solar has successfully developed five of the largest projects in the U.S. totaling more than 1,900 MW of solar energy. Throughout our company's history, we have been a partner of choice for U.S. utilities. Our core project development expertise is in the utility-scale or large-scale solar segment, where we provide reliable, stable power that is cost-competitive with traditional energy sources. No single company offers more development experience than First Solar.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony in **support of HB 1970**. First Solar appreciates any form of incremental solar development in the Commonwealth, and as HB 1970 correctly highlights, an overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanian's are unable to host on-



site solar projects.¹ Pennsylvania ratepayers already have an option to participate in retail choice programs, including 100% renewable energy options, if they choose. However, similar utility programs have proven that some customers prefer to source their electricity through locally-sited renewable projects that have tangible environmental and economic benefits to their communities – the local solar program would offer that option.

Furthermore, similar to shopping at Costco or Sam’s Club, solar becomes increasingly affordable with scale – larger projects capture economies of scale that make them cheaper. The local solar program recognizes those benefits and would allow those economies of scale to be passed along to the program’s participants, which should translate into lower costs than could be achieved through smaller, individual on-site projects.

First Solar has directly supported utilities in other regions of the country in the development and implementation of this type of customer program and we’ve witnessed their success first-hand. As of 2018, the Smart Electric Power Alliance estimated that more than 220 electric utilities in at least 36 states were offering similar customer programs². This model has been thoroughly researched and well-proven. The majority of similar utility programs have been successful at attracting customer participation and oftentimes create an opportunity for customers to hedge against future fluctuations in electricity rates. Similar programs have also been structured to minimize non-participant ratepayer impacts.

As the largest U.S. solar panel manufacturer in the Western hemisphere and one of the largest solar project developers in the country, First Solar looks forward to Pennsylvania’s solar future. Just last week, the International Energy Agency referred to solar as the “new king of the world’s electricity markets.”³ As of now, Pennsylvania is lagging behind much of the country in solar deployment, but HB 1970 would position Pennsylvanian’s to reap the benefits of this rapidly emerging technology. For all of the above reasons, we enthusiastically support HB 1970.

¹ This can be due to not renting/leasing their property, not having sufficient space to accommodate solar panels, or having non-ideal site conditions for on-site solar such as substantial shading due to trees and other nearby obstructions.

² Smart Electric Power Alliance: *Community Solar Program Design Models*, April 2018
<https://sepapower.org/resource/community-solar-program-designs-2018-version/>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/iea-energy-renewables/solar-the-new-king-of-electricity-as-renewables-make-up-bigger-slice-of-supply-iea-idUSKBN26Y0EX>



I appreciate your time and consideration today and would be pleased to discuss any questions you may have at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Campbell".

Becky Campbell
Manager, Government Affairs
First Solar
Rebecca.Campbell@firstsolar.com
(480)-236-2085