



Testimony of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia
Devi Ramkissoon, Executive Director
On the Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standard (House Bill 2277)
Before the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee
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Good morning Chair Vitali, Chair Caser, and distinguished members of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

My name is Devi Ramkissoon, and I am the executive director of the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia (SBN). SBN is a vibrant community of roughly 140 businesses committed to fostering a just, green, and thriving local economy in the greater Philadelphia region. Our organization's work spans across a variety of sectors, including clean energy, green stormwater infrastructure, local food systems, and urban forestry. Through our diverse membership, SBN promotes a common goal of creating a positive impact within our community and beyond. Many of our members have already voiced their enthusiastic support for House Bill 2277, the Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standard (PRESS). In doing so, they are united by their shared dedication to enhancing the social and environmental impacts of their business practices.

Pennsylvania has long been a leader in the energy sector, but the economic landscape is rapidly changing. To maintain our leadership and ensure a climate-resilient future, we must more fully embrace clean energy. PRESS is an essential step in this direction. By modernizing our renewable energy standards, PRESS will not only help meet the Commonwealth's ambitious climate goals, but will also drive economic growth.

The renewable energy sector presents a tremendous opportunity for Pennsylvania. If passed, PRESS has the potential to save ratepayers [\\$252 million in the first five years](#), [create over 15,000 jobs annually through 2040](#), and generate [\\$5.1 billion in investments across the Commonwealth](#). Unlocking this potential is critical, as we currently lag behind a majority of states in renewable energy growth. PRESS will help reverse this trend, making Pennsylvania a hub for clean energy jobs and innovation.

For businesses, particularly those in the energy sector, the transition to renewable energy offers significant benefits. For example, according to [Bloomberg](#), jobs in the renewable energy sector typically pay higher wages, offer better worker benefits, and have lower barriers to entry when compared to traditional energy jobs. This makes them accessible and advantageous for a



broader segment of the workforce. This means higher income levels and improved job security for Pennsylvanians.

Doug Edwards, President of Exact Solar, an SBN member business and premier installer of solar energy systems in Pennsylvania, underscores the importance of forward-thinking legislation like HB 2277. He states "The PRESS initiative represents a significant opportunity for our state to bolster its renewable energy sector, ensuring we remain at the forefront of American energy producers as the market shifts. We believe that Governor Shapiro's PRESS initiative, if passed, will meaningfully support the Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) market, making more solar projects financially viable and helping small businesses like ours continue hiring, growing, and investing in our business and workforce development." This sentiment from Exact Solar highlights the crucial role that supportive policies play in driving the sector forward. By advancing PRESS, we can support small, independent businesses like Exact Solar, in thriving sustainably and competitively. These businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and their success contributes to robust economic growth.

Pennsylvania's clean energy economy grew 4.3 percent and added nearly 4,000 new workers in 2022, according to [E2's Clean Jobs PA report](#). Clean energy now accounts for over one-third of all energy industry jobs in Pennsylvania, a strong statement for the nation's second-largest energy producer. Advancing the PRESS initiative will further capitalize on this momentum, ensuring continued growth and investment in the sector and reinforcing Pennsylvania's leadership in shaping a sustainable energy future.

In addition to job creation, renewable energy investments can enhance community resilience and reduce energy costs. PRESS will support communities that have historically relied on the coal and natural gas industries. Renewable energy sources are less susceptible to the price volatility associated with fossil fuels. By diversifying our energy mix, Pennsylvania can build a more resilient economy that is better equipped to withstand energy market fluctuations. This stability is crucial for businesses and households alike, providing predictable energy costs and reducing the risk of economic disruptions.

By updating our renewable energy standards, we can also unlock significant federal investments and support economic diversification in local communities. [States like Georgia, Michigan, and Ohio](#) are reaping the substantial benefits of federal clean energy investments, receiving billions of dollars of investments since 2022. In contrast, Pennsylvania has been left behind. It's time we capitalize on these opportunities.

Opponents of PRESS argue that transitioning to renewable energy will increase costs for consumers. However, the reality is quite the opposite. Diversifying our energy sources and increasing the use of renewables like wind and solar will stabilize and lower energy prices over



time. Since 2016, natural gas prices have [increased by 51%](#) for Pennsylvania families and businesses. Transitioning to renewable energy sources can lead to significant energy savings. Renewable energy technologies, such as solar and wind power, have become increasingly cost-competitive with traditional fossil fuels. Utility-scale solar power is already more affordable than natural gas, and the federal clean energy plan projects further cost reductions. PRESS, combined with the governor's PACER program, could save consumers millions of dollars on their utility bills in the first five years. In fact, [recent modeling by the NRDC](#) shows that between 2025 and 2042, the average household in Pennsylvania would save a total of \$329 on electricity bills and would cut bills by 1.3% annually on average over the next two decades and by up to 2.4% annually in the mid-2030s.

Governor Shapiro's energy plan is designed to bring Pennsylvania's energy generation into better balance through expanding renewable energy sources. This plan, if passed, has the potential to save ratepayers millions of dollars, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and generate billions of dollars of investments across the Commonwealth. Advancing PRESS legislation is not just a policy choice; it is an economic necessity. It will position Pennsylvania as a leader in the renewable energy sector and ensure a sustainable future for our state. We urge you to support HB 2277 and help us build a more resilient and prosperous Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.