

Dear Energy Committee Members:

My purpose here is to encourage you to consider whether the solar energy legislation under consideration will properly address the diverse needs of the various regions of Michigan. Specifically, I am concerned that the legislation may unduly reduce local control of ordinances/regulations related to the introduction of large-scale solar energy production into communities. It is clear to me that we need to take steps to introduce renewable energy generation across the state of Michigan. I also believe that we need to ensure that the introduction of this industry doesn't cause irreparable damage to the culture, character, and livelihood of the communities. I encourage you to allow the local government organizations to retain enough control to effectively serve their communities while addressing the future energy needs of the state.

I am a resident homeowner in Montague, Michigan and also own some vacant land in White River Township in Muskegon County as well as a second home in Royal Oak where my son resides. We are long-term residents and property owners of Michigan.

I understand that legislation will soon be proposed related to the regulation of renewable resources within the state of Michigan. This legislation has been characterized as taking much of the control away from local government bodies regarding the regulations that would determine, among other things, the amount and placement of solar and wind energy generation facilities.

The city of Montague is adjacent to White River Township (WRT) in Muskegon County. My family spends much of our leisure time on the nearby Lake Michigan beaches that are in White River Township, and we travel through the picturesque community to reach the beaches, golf course, and local businesses. We feel privileged to live in such close proximity to Lake Michigan and understand how the agricultural and wooded areas provide a peaceful transition for visitors as they make the short drive from the busy US31 to the serenity of the parks and beaches.

White River Township has been working diligently to establish ordinances that will address the many, often conflicting, priorities of the community regarding the introduction of industrial solar power production within the township. In this effort the township is considering the financial needs of the community, the clean energy needs of society, existing brownfield sites, and the aesthetic needs of an area that relies on seasonal visitors.

Please take a critical look at legislation that would take ordinance/regulation control away from the local representatives of the people. As a state we have a collective need to enable and encourage the transition to clean and renewable energy sources, but different areas of the state should be treated differently based on their specific needs and characteristics.

I encourage you to set acreage caps on the percentage of land by zoning type with a requirement to utilize available industrial land and brownfields. Please also set the acreage cap to limit use of agricultural land where population density is high.

I strongly recommend regulation for industrial solar be limited to 5% of a community in total, allowing up to 2% on agricultural zoned land and an additional 3% on industrial/commercial land where available with 600 foot setbacks from non-participating property lines, homes and public roadways. By requiring use of a 150% greater amount of industrial land for large-scale solar projects over that of agricultural land, overall property values in Michigan will actually increase with the presence of industrial-scale solar. In addition, our state will suffer fewer losses in our agriculture industry, which is one of the most diverse in the nation.

Thank you for your time and consideration to these ideas as you discuss and vote on the upcoming DRAFT State Regulated Solar ordinance.

Regards,

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