



March 03, 2023

Re: Support of SF2460

Chair Frentz and committee members,

Vote Solar is a non-profit advocacy policy organization working to repower our communities with sunshine and build a thriving clean economy with affordable solar energy for all. I am the Midwest Regional Director for Vote Solar and a lifelong resident of Minnesota, and I am writing in support of Senate File 2460.

Public Utilities Commission (“PUC”) proceedings are highly technical, time intensive, and often inherently prohibitive for community members or underresourced organizations to actively participate. The PUC website states that “One of [its] key functions ... is to balance the private and public interests affected in each docket, and to make decisions that appropriately balance these interests.” Without the ability and resources to actively participate in the processes of the PUC, the public’s interests are not adequately represented. Entities such as investor-owned utilities, and other well-funded public institutions, have a structural advantage in the process. A mechanism that levels the playing field for community-based and underresourced organizations is vital to a fair and democratic process.

Vote Solar is currently intervening in the Xcel Rate Case as a member of the Just Solar Coalition (“JSC”) - represented by the Environmental Law & Policy Center. The JSC supports a transition to a green energy economy that not only includes everyone but also helps to close the employment gap, improves the natural world, and creates a new story about the community’s role in the energy system. This is an innovative community-based approach to rate case intervention. The coalition’s intervention is only possible through concerted efforts by coalition members to fundraise and utilize in-kind contributions - along with plans to apply for intervenor compensation at the conclusion of the docket. Funding an intervention in this way is no small feat and is not practical for many organizations. Innovative, public, tribal, and community-based interventions can be made possible through stronger intervenor compensation mechanisms.

I urge committee members to support SF2460. This bill is a step toward a more inclusive and fair decision-making process that supports just and reasonable regulatory outcomes.

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