

LIGHTSTAR

March 26, 2025

Senator Nick Frentz, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Testimony on SF2855, Community solar garden program sunset

Dear Chair Frentz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SF2855, *community solar garden program sunset*. **Lightstar Renewables, LLC (Lightstar) strongly opposes this proposed legislation.**

Lightstar develops, builds, and owns community solar projects with more than 1.5 gigawatt (GW) of projects completed or in development in the United States and abroad. Lightstar is focused on community solar development that is built with ecological and agricultural needs at the forefront. Our Minnesota pipeline currently consists of around 20MW of community solar projects in various stages of development, representing enough clean energy generation to power approximately 4,000 homes.

Lightstar feels the current program dates and MW allocations as set in Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 216B.1641 are appropriate for steady, reasonable market growth at 80MW in 2027, 2028, 2029, and 2030, and 60MW in 2031 and each year thereafter. When Lightstar commits to a market, as the company has done in Minnesota, we commit for the long-term. Therefore, the provision to sunset the community solar program after 2028 as filed in SF2855 would hinder our ability to bring our current projects to fruition and invest in Minnesota beyond 2028.

Since community solar developers bear all costs associated with grid infrastructure upgrades necessary to interconnect these projects, community solar is the only way private investment pays for much-needed grid infrastructure upgrades. Without this injection of private capital to the utility grid, Minnesota ratepayers will be responsible for these costs when upgrades are unavoidable. To put this in perspective, Lightstar typically invests approximately \$800,000 - \$1.2 million for interconnection alone for the average 5MW community solar project. Lightstar has already started investing in the market through our current projects, and the 2028 sunset would make it nearly impossible for us to fully participate and bring these benefits to Minnesota.

We appreciate your consideration of our opposition to this bill. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,



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