



CLEAR ENERGY COALITION

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CLEAR Energy Coalition

Advancing a Clean, Local,
Equitable, Affordable, and Reliable
Energy Future for Minnesota

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Chair Marty and Senate Finance Committee Members,

The CLEAR Energy Coalition supports clean, affordable, and reliable energy for all Minnesotans, including local rooftop and community solar. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on Senate File 2393, the Senate Omnibus Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Bill.

The CLEAR Energy Coalition opposes the sunset of the Community Solar Garden Program contained in SF 2393. Article 3, Section 5 of the bill (lines 12.5-12.7) would prematurely sunset the successful program on July 31, 2030. We urge the Committee to reject this rollback of Minnesota's clean energy policy, which would take power and bill savings away from Minnesota families, businesses, and community institutions, to the benefit of Xcel Energy's shareholders.

Sunsetting Minnesota's [nation-leading Community Solar Garden Program](#) constitutes a radical reversal in state policy. The Legislature made changes just two years ago to improve program benefits for low- to moderate-income families, affordable housing providers, schools, and other public interest institutions, as well as add important consumer protection provisions.

The 2023 changes to the program have already resolved concerns being raised now by legislators and Xcel. These changes included placing annual caps on program capacity, prioritizing residential customers, and ensuring that non-subscribing low-income customers aren't paying higher bills because of the program.

Community solar makes it possible for thousands of Minnesotans — especially working class families, renters, and others who can't afford rooftop solar — to reduce their electricity bills, share the financial benefits of clean energy, and do their part to take care of our environment. For Minnesota as a whole, the revised Community Solar Garden Program is expected to deliver nearly **\$3 billion in net benefits**, [according to the Department of Commerce](#) — in part, because community solar gardens deliver savings for all utility customers by lowering peak demand and avoiding expensive transmission grid upgrades. Notably, the program also creates new jobs in the green economy and provides crucial revenue for family farms via lease payments.

How Community Solar Saves Ratepayers Money, Compared to Utility-Scale Solar

	Includes delivery costs	Can reduce the need for grid upgrades	Avoids losses in transmission	Avoids utility shareholder price premium	Price locked in for 25 years	Risk carried by 3rd parties, not utility customers
"Wholesale power" "Market Price"	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Community solar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Learn more about why utilities lie about community solar costs at ilsr.org/articles/investor-owned-utilities-myths-costs-rooftop-solar/

Despite these benefits, Xcel Energy and other utility monopolies push back against community solar gardens and local solar. That's because these programs empower communities to build energy projects that utility investors don't profit from.

We respectfully encourage the Committee to oppose SF 2393 to ensure that Minnesota's clean energy transition brings tangible benefits to our state's families and communities, not just big corporations and wealthy investors. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The CLEAR Energy Coalition

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Minnesota Environmental Justice Table
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Vote Solar

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Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light
Solar United Neighbors