



Monticello Public Schools

Independent School District No. 882

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Dear Senator Frentz,

As the Director of Business Services for Monticello Public Schools, I want to thank you for your continued advocacy for public education and your efforts to support communities like ours. I am reaching out today regarding SF 2393 and the proposed changes to Minnesota's Community Solar Garden (CSG) program. While the intent of the legislation is understood, the impact of sunseting the current model has significant financial implications for public institutions — especially school districts.

At Monticello Public Schools, we've taken a forward-thinking approach to managing energy costs by investing in LED lighting upgrades, building automation, and other energy efficiency measures. These efforts, along with our participation in Community Solar Gardens (CSGs), have allowed us to reduce electricity usage by 5 million kilowatt-hours annually over the past five years. As a result, we've saved between \$100,000 and \$172,000 each year—equivalent to funding approximately two full-time teaching positions annually. Programs like CSGs aren't just about sustainability; they directly impact our ability to invest in teachers and student support services.

Sunseting this program would put those savings—and the staff and students who rely on them—at risk. We urge you to preserve and support programs like Community Solar Gardens that allow schools to reinvest savings back into classrooms and learning. If SF 2393 leads to the closure of these savings opportunities without a comparable or better model in place, districts like ours lose a critical lever to manage costs without cutting programs. And that's not just about dollars — it's about people. It's about choices between investing in students versus paying increasing energy bills.

Beyond the immediate cost, this change also sends a chilling message to school districts and other public entities considering future clean energy investments. If stable, predictable programs like CSGs can be abruptly altered, it makes it difficult to plan long-term and confidently commit to energy efficiency upgrades or renewable initiatives. We believe there's a path forward that preserves the strengths of the current CSG model while evolving it to serve more Minnesotans equitably. We urge you to ensure that any legislative changes include a thoughtful transition and protect existing agreements for public sector participants.

Thank you again for your dedication to the communities you serve, and for considering the real-world implications of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Tina Burkholder,
Director of Business Services