

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Workers from Across Wisconsin Urge PSC to Oppose Third-Party Ownership

Madison — Hundreds of members of Wisconsin’s unionized construction trades have submitted public comments opposing the Public Service Commission’s consideration of a policy that would allow third-party financing and ownership of renewables in Wisconsin, and would essentially lead to the deregulation of Wisconsin’s utilities.

“Third-party ownership will open Wisconsin to out-of-state companies that prioritize their profit margins over the safety and reliability of our power grid,” said Emily Pritzkow, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Building Trades Council, “We know that the business model for these types of developers primarily relies on lower-paid, lower-skilled labor. The result is a transient workforce, which has a negative impact on the construction industry, our local communities, and — when a project is not completed correctly — utility ratepayers.”

The comments put forward by members of Wisconsin’s building trades, submitted from all over the state, are more than double the number submitted by those supporting deregulation.

Workers employed by third-party solar developers — often labeled “solar installers” and hired on a temporary basis — do not participate in state or federally-registered apprenticeship programs that mandate rigorous safety training, including electrical safety. Furthermore, third-party ownership and financing would be especially harmful to low-income ratepayers, who lack the building ownership and/or financial resources to invest in private solar panels, and still must pay the fixed costs of distributing power and maintaining the rest of the state’s electrical grid.

“When solar projects are constructed at utility-scale with a skilled union workforce, the projects spur investments from local wages that are spent locally, making our communities stronger,” added Pritzkow, “Our members from across the state have spoken loud and clear. The PSC should reject these petitions and remain focused on supporting utility projects that create real and lasting economic benefits for Wisconsin and its workforce.”

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About WBTC

The **Wisconsin Building Trades Council** was founded in 2018 to carry on its member unions' proud traditions, many of which have been defending workers' rights for over 130 years. Today, WBTC supports



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and furthers the efforts of 17 different craft member organizations in the building trades, with over 40,000 members overall. All are working together to:

- Ensure and increase the number of Wisconsin jobs that support Wisconsin communities
- Increase investment in building, energy, water, and transportation infrastructure
- Ensure fair and prevailing wages and workplace safety protections for all workers on all Wisconsin construction projects
- Develop Wisconsin's current and future workforce through high-quality, accessible union apprenticeship programs and continuing education opportunities
- Support initiatives that improve diversity and inclusion in the construction industry
- Support and advocate for responsible bidder ordinances and other actions or efforts that protect fair wages, workers, and surrounding communities

Member Unions

- Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers District Council of Wisconsin
- International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers
- International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers Local 18
- International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers Union 107
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 200
- International Union of Elevator Constructors
- International Union of Operating Engineers Local 139
- International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 7
- Ironworkers District Council of North Central States
- North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters
- Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' Local 599 and 633
- Wisconsin Laborers' District Council
- The Wisconsin Pipe Trades Association
- United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, & Allied Workers