



Dear Members of the Legislature,

Our coalition represents a growing group of Wisconsin businesses and organizations that see community solar as a commonsense solution to rising electric rates. It gives customers more choice, lowers bills, drives private investment, and strengthens local control.

Recently, the investor-owned utilities and their allies have circulated letters that don't tell the full story about the community solar bill from Rep Scott Krug and Sen Patrick Testin. After months of discussions with We Energies and Alliant Energy, the bill has been shaped to work for Wisconsin — saving people money, protecting farmland, and bringing real competition and choice to the energy market. We appreciate the chance to set the record straight.

Community Solar Benefits Everyone

Community solar helps keep costs down for everyone by making power right where it's used — near homes, farms, and businesses. That means Wisconsin utilities don't have to spend as much building big power plants or long transmission lines. And since utilities earn profits by building more infrastructure, they're not eager to admit that local solar helps avoid those costly projects and saves everyone money in the long run — so instead, they use “cost shift” as the bogeyman to scare people away from real competition. The bill specifically includes three ratepayer protection provisions:

1. **Customers will pay their fair share.** Community solar subscribers will pay a minimum bill to cover grid costs like poles and wires, ensuring everyone contributes their part.
2. **Protects non-subscribers and ensures fairness.** The bill closes a loophole that could've let utilities charge unfairly and makes sure costs and benefits are measured fairly so non-subscribers aren't paying extra just to preserve utility profits.
3. **Program review after 4 years.** Lawmakers receive a public report in 4 years to see if the program is performing and can make changes if it's not delivering for ratepayers.

Strong Consumer and Program Protections

Community solar is a free-market approach that's already working in more than 20 states. In Wisconsin, it will include clear rules to ensure fairness—simple contracts, transparent billing, and accountability if something goes wrong. Everyone plays by the same rules, creating strong protections, real competition, and new opportunities without added red tape.

Long-Term Contracts Are Normal in Energy

Building power projects requires big up-front investment, so long-term contracts are the norm. Utilities sign decades-long deals all the time for power plants, transmission lines, and even to close old facilities. Community solar projects work the same way, however they use private capital and there are penalties if they can't get projects fully subscribed.

Community Solar Works When There's Competition

Wisconsin has only 7 utility-built community solar projects, and every one is full with a waiting list. The handful of other projects are serving cooperative members only. That shows people want in, but utilities haven't built more. In states where community solar succeeds, it's because competition drives results — and if a project fails, ratepayers aren't stuck paying the bill.

Learning from Other States' Experiences

Utilities like to point to Minnesota as proof that community solar doesn't work, but that debate is about projects built over 10 years ago under an old pricing model that no one uses anymore. Wisconsin's bill provides strong ratepayer protections and ensures subscribers continue to pay their fair share of fixed costs. It's like comparing apples and oranges.

This Bill Doesn't Affect Municipal Utilities or Co-ops

Some municipal utilities and electric co-ops have voiced opposition to the bill, even though it doesn't apply to them. It only covers investor-owned utility areas and keeps local control fully intact — so it's puzzling to see them push back on something that brings more choice and lower-cost power to Wisconsin families, farms, and businesses.

Community solar's a common-sense way to meet WI's growing energy needs. With data centers and businesses using more power, we need energy that can come online fast and reliably. These projects are built in months, not years, with private dollars—not rate hikes. They keep energy money in WI, support farmers, ease pressure on the grid, and help families save on electric bills.

We hope you will support this legislation and join Sen Testin and Rep Krug as a cosponsor. If you have any questions about the memo or legislation please contact Matthew Hargarten, VP of Coalition for Community Solar Access at 414-745-8408.

Sincerely,

Advocate Aurora Health
Alliance for Wisconsin Retailers
American Power Play
Arch Electric
Associated Builder and Contractors of WI
Coalition for Community Solar Access
Conservatives for a Clean Energy Future
Jolma Utilities

Kohler Co.
Organic Valley
RENEW Wisconsin
Walmart
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisconsin Grocers Association
Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty