



March 21, 2023

Re: HF2747

Chair Acomb and committee members,

Vote Solar is a non-profit advocacy policy organization working to repower our communities with sunshine and build a thriving clean economy with affordable solar energy for all. I am the Midwest Regional Director for Vote Solar and a lifelong resident of Minnesota, and I am writing in regard to HF 2747 – Solar for Schools program appropriation, with the inclusion of the DE2 amendment.

The Solar on Schools program is a huge victory for Minnesota’s children, economic development, and a clean energy future. Schools typically have high energy costs and ample space for solar energy systems but are often left out of the solar development conversation due to limited discretionary funding. The Solar on Schools program is bringing renewable energy to Minnesota communities and cutting energy costs for school districts that often operate on tight budgets. We deeply appreciate the requested funding increase and inclusion of tribal schools within the DE2 amendment.

However, despite the benefits the program has already brought to many school districts in the state, the outcomes for rural and metro schools have not been comparable, and the suggested revisions do not fully address the current inequities within the program. Further meaningful benefits are currently left on the table - especially for school districts in greater Minnesota.

Key issues limiting the program’s reach are as follows:

- The Department of Commerce portion of the program limits arrays in greater Minnesota to 40kw max - this is a fraction of a school's energy usage.
- The need for incentives to increase the ability of timely interconnection - especially in rural electric cooperative service territories.
- Additional support for school districts that are under-resourced or situated in environmental justice communities.

Improvements to these provisions will increase solar installations on schools, further reduce the energy burden for schools in great need, provide additional educational opportunities for students, and increase environmental benefits – all wins across the board for Minnesota’s communities. Additionally, taking advantage of current and impending IJA and IRA opportunities will round out the state’s incentives and enhance the cost-effectiveness and reach of Minnesota’s Solar on Schools program.



Together we can create a clean energy future that supports Minnesota's communities and provides benefits to individuals most affected by climate change, energy inequity, and environmental injustice.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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