

February 13, 2023

Rep. Patty Acomb
Chair, House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Legislature
200 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Acomb and members:

In the record of your February 14, 2023 hearing, please include this letter in strong support of House File 1262 and Senate File 100, legislation clarifying the role of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) when it comes to approval of residential rooftop solar panel projects.

I am not a lobbyist. I'm just a citizen who wants to have the option of enjoying the financial benefits of residential rooftop solar energy, and wants more clean, renewable energy in the world to prevent climate change, pollution, and foreign wars related to securing foreign-produced energy sources.

I'm an "empty nester" who recently down-sized. For the first time in my life, we moved into a home governed by an HOA. Shortly after moving in, I emailed the HOA to ask if there are any limitations related to rooftop solar panels. My HOA contact politely emailed me to deliver a non-rejection rejection: "...*there are currently no specific restrictions on solar panel installations, other than they must not be visible from the public right-of-ways (emphasis added).*"

Since all pitched roofs are visible from public rights-of-way — streets, sidewalks, and alleys — I believe the HOA was effectively telling me, in an indirect "Minnesota Nice" way, that there is no way they are going to let me or anyone else install solar panels in their development. So, I didn't press the issue any further.

HOAs could be a significant barrier to the expansion of residential rooftop solar panel use. After all, [Iproperty Management](#) says that *583,462 homes in Minnesota are part of HOA communities*.

This is obviously a critically important environmental issue, but it's much more than that. Because homeowners with rooftop solar panels are saving thousands of dollars in energy bills, this is also a significant financial issue. Now that the price of solar energy systems has decreased significantly, and energy costs are skyrocketing, the payoff from solar panels has never been more lucrative.

While solar panels are not works of art, they now blend in much better than in the past. We're all much more accustomed to seeing them, and solar panel products are more attractive and unobtrusive than they used to be. More importantly, the benefits of solar panel use — limiting catastrophic climate change and defraying significant household costs — greatly outweigh any slight aesthetic cost. It's not a close call.

Thanks for your work on this issue. I look forward to tracking your progress.

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