



August 27, 2020

Subject: Solar Industry Supports use of Renewable Development Account funds

Representatives:

The Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association (MnSEIA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit trade organization that represents our state's solar and energy storage businesses. Together we represent 110 solar companies and related businesses, which employ over 4,000 Minnesotans. On behalf of Minnesota's solar energy business community, we write to encourage appropriations from the Renewable Development Account (RDA) to support the state's solar industries.

The economic crisis wrought by the global pandemic, and the destruction of property during the recent civil unrest has been financially challenging for many Minnesotans. Historically disadvantaged communities have borne the brunt of these crises—suffering from greater infection rates, job loss, and the destruction of small businesses. Fortunately, investments in the clean energy sector can and will lead the charge to rebuild. The solar industry supports all three of the bills being heard today, because they will inject economic stimulus into Minnesota's economy without raising tax dollars.

The proposal in HF 4172 to fund the expansion of the city-owned solar module manufacturing plant building in Mountain Iron's Renewable Energy Industrial Park will add much-needed manufacturing jobs to Greater Minnesota communities, while creating modules for use in Xcel Energy's service territory, among others.

Anhydrous ammonia, like what would be created from HF 4365, has the potential to act as battery technology to ease intermittency from solar and wind technologies, and to do so with Minnesota sunshine and agricultural resources. Developing cost-effective energy storage resources is paramount to a more distributed energy resource (DER) future. Minnesota is already a national leader in DERs, and projects like this one can make Minnesota a leader in storage technology as well.

Finally, the Rebuild Right Grant Program would make investments in the people and businesses that could really use assistance right now. On-site rooftop solar and battery storage help save customers money, and can achieve payback periods in under five years while creating reduced, eliminated or even negative electricity bills for twenty years thereafter. MnSEIA would, however, like to challenge the Legislature to consider funding for job training assistance as part of the Rebuild Right program. Adding additional dollars for projects, like the Regional Apprenticeship Training Center in North Minneapolis, would ensure that the project development is also done by people who live and work in the community where the grants would be issued.

We respectfully ask for your support in passing all three RDA appropriations, because they will immediately spur clean energy jobs here in Minnesota. Thank you for your steady leadership during this critical time as we address the public health, social, economic, and climate challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

David Shaffer
Executive Director
Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association