

Testimony for Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee

Meeting: Wednesday March 15, 2023, at 3:00 PM

Chair: Rep. Patty Acomb

Regarding: HF2627 (Carroll) - Solar on closed landfills funding provided, feasibility analysis required, and money appropriated.

Submitted by: Gary DeVaan of the Hopkins Community Solar Garden citizen group.

Representatives, Chair Acomb,

My name is Gary DeVaan and I represent a small group of citizens in Hopkins, Hopkins Community Solar Garden, HCSG. We would like to speak in favor of HF2627. I want to thank Representative Carroll for bringing this bill forward.

There is popular support for this type of legislation. As I have been speaking to my friends and neighbors there is an enthusiastic constituency that is looking for ways to use less fossil fuels and participate in cleaning our environment. We all would like to use green energy that would be located near where we live so if there is a power outage there is a likelihood that we would be less affected and likely to be using green electricity every day.

HCSG would like Hopkins to build a community solar garden within the Hopkins city limits. The city of Hopkins owns a landfill site of over 33 acres that we think could be ideal for this purpose. It is managed by the PCA and is restricted by the bonds that were used to finance the capping of this landfill. The bonds specifically limit this land from any commercial use.

HCSG would encourage Hopkins to create a community solar garden on the site that would be available to our many renters, condo owners, and homeowners who have no ability to install solar on their property.

Hopkins, as you may know, is geographically small, only 4 square miles. Thirty-three acres is a large piece of land in Hopkins to have no productive use.

According to the PCA's [Feasibility of Solar Development on State-Managed Closed Landfills: A Report to the Legislature](#), PCA manages 111 capped landfills totaling nearly 4500 acres that could generate a terawatt of electricity, enough for 100,000 homes. Developing these sites for solar production would create distributed electric generation statewide without using valuable farmland. These sites are in every congressional district and in most legislative districts and would benefit citizens statewide. The State of Minnesota owns 43 of these sites.

I want you to know that we understand that there would be competition for the allocated funding in this bill. There is over 106 million dollars of outstanding bonds that would need to be

paid off to accommodate all the landfill sites PCA manages. Our site, for a variety of reasons may not be at the top. But we must start somewhere. These sites are wasted space otherwise and, in many cases, these are ideal locations for solar installations.

In addition to paying off the bonds, there are increased costs for study and construction of solar on landfill sites. As would building canopies over parking lots, roadways, and other sites that could be dual use acreage. I think we need to be creative in encouraging more solar in the metro area and on sites that are not prime farmland. Sites where there is more electricity demand in cities and suburbs, where electricity doesn't have to be transmitted many miles suffering line loss. Sites like these may incur additional costs, but will generate electricity where it is needed being more efficient.

I look forward to debate on this bill and additional testimony.