

CLEAR Energy Coalition

April 1, 2024

RE: SUPPORT for House File 5171 (Carroll, Acomb) - Grant Program for local adoption of SolarAPP+

Dear Chair Acomb and members of the Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee:

We support House File 5171 which will establish a grant program at the Minnesota Department of Commerce to encourage local units of government to adopt the SolarAPP+ permitting program.

SolarAPP+ is a software program created by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) that coordinates and modernizes the permitting for rooftop solar by doing plan checks and issuing permits instantly for systems that meet set requirements. These grants will help cover the costs associated with implementing SolarAPP+. The SolarAPP+ program itself is offered free of charge by NREL.

SolarAPP+ does not weaken or undermine any building or electrical codes or local ordinances. It is voluntary and local governments are not required to use it. However, we know that when local governments implement it, permitting times are reduced and permitting is simplified by being online. While permitting fees remain unchanged, the time spent on permitting by installers and local governments is reduced significantly, reducing costs. This can reduce the cost of solar making it more affordable. SolarAPP+ can even improve the safety of installed systems.

We believe this is a cost-effective way to accelerate the deployment of clean energy in our state by making it quicker, cheaper and easier to install simple rooftop solar. More rooftop solar will also save homeowners money by reducing their electricity bills.

Nationally, over 175 cities and counties in 12 states around the country have implemented SolarAPP+.

The CLEAR Energy Coalition is committed to policy that advances distributed solar with a focus on equity. Key to making rooftop solar equitable is reducing costs so that it is more affordable. This benefits everyone but can potentially benefit low income homeowners the most by making what was previously not affordable, possible.

Sincerely,

CLEAR Energy Coalition

Marcus Mills
Black Visions;

(cont.)



Lee Samelson
Community Power;

Pouya Najmaie
Cooperative Energy Futures;

John Farrell
Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR);

Nazir Khan
Minnesota Environmental Justice Table;

Brett Pence
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light;

Patty O'Keefe
Sierra Club North Star Chapter;

Bobby King
Solar United Neighbors;

Jenna Warmuth
Vote Solar.

