



Good afternoon esteemed members of the Community Solar Ad Hoc Committee:

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of ENGIE in **support of a bill establishing a competitive community solar program in Georgia**. ENGIE is a global leader in low-carbon energy with approximately 96,000 employees in 30 countries. With more than 170 years of rich heritage embedded in innovation, our mission is to create a sustainable future built on clean, affordable, and resilient energy and the infrastructure that supports it. Today, we have 101 GW of installed generation capacity, including 38 GW of renewables.

ENGIE currently provides affordable clean energy to customers via community solar programs in five states around the country – all at a discount (ranging between 10-60%) to what families and businesses would ordinarily pay for energy. We subscribe everyone from low-income families to tech giants and everyone in between.

In addition to direct cost savings to ratepayers, ENGIE community solar gardens can provide several other distinct benefits as well, including:

- 1) **Size and Scale.** Community solar projects are small and differ greatly from large, utility-scale solar installations. A typical community solar project fits on approximately 20 acres and can be strategically placed on a parcel to maximize its use. Often, projects can be tucked out of sight from major roads and neighbors or placed on marginal soils to add additional revenue for farmers. Hosting a community solar project can occur in tandem with traditional agriculture – crops can be interspersed with panels or placed on an area of land not used or under-utilized for farming. As part of our normal process, ENGIE creates pollinator habitat on all of our community solar projects. This means the area between the panels is planted with a mix of native and pollinator-friendly plants and grasses. We work with local seed distributors to create a mix that works well in the specific area where our facility is located. Adding pollinator habitat is cost-effective and helps improve soil and aids in hydrology over time, which can benefit the site's future use after the solar project has been properly decommissioned.
- 2) **Land Use & Farming.** Community solar can also help to keep farms in families. Our landowners are typically looking for an alternative use for their land other than or in addition to traditional farming. Rents paid by solar to landowners are consistent sources of income for up to 30-35 years. Once the project has reached the end of its life, the solar equipment is easily removed, and land returned to its pre-solar condition.
- 3) **Brownfield Re-use.** ENGIE solar gardens give new life to former industrial sites and land that has been previously contaminated and now sites under-utilized. We've developed solar on a former coal-fired power plant, landfills, and mine lands.
- 4) **Resiliency & Grid Improvement.** Increasing distributed solar resources in the state can help improve grid resiliency and reliability. We will be able to connect projects to strategic areas of the grid and provide upgrades to distribution system infrastructure where our projects will be interconnected. Such updates are paid for by ENGIE – not by ratepayers. These upgrades typically benefit *additional* energy users, not just those who subscribe to our project.

We look forward to working with the Legislature to craft a sustainable community solar program that provides net benefits to Georgians.

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