

August 14th, 2024

Representative Beth Camp
Chair, House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Ad Hoc Committee on Community Solar

CC: Members of the Committee

RE: Community Solar

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Brandon Smithwood, Vice President of Policy for Dimension Energy. Thank you for convening this hearing to discuss community solar and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Dimension Energy is a leading community solar developer, owner, and operator. Dimension has executed more than 450 megawatts (MW) of community solar and invested \$400 million into clean energy assets since its 2018 founding. The company plans to invest over \$3 billion over the next 5 years, with more than 2 gigawatts (GW) under development in 12 states. In the communities where we invest, our projects deliver clean energy, local jobs, tax revenue, and savings, alongside other benefits including workforce development and educational opportunities. Dimension is making clean energy work for everyone.

Our headquarters are in Georgia, but we have not been able to invest in projects in the state due to state law. Georgia's pool of talent and business-friendly environment has allowed us to recruit and grow a team of skilled construction management, asset management, and corporate services professionals at our headquarters, where 23 of our 86 employees reside. However, the balance of our staff conducting financing, business development, engineering and construction live outside the state, closer to the markets where we develop, own and operate projects. Dimension hopes to further grow its Georgia team and bring some of its planned \$3 billion investment to the state. We think Virginia is an example of what a competitive community solar marketplace, like what is being discussed here today, can provide to Georgia.

Dimension is the largest owner of operating projects in Virginia. In 2020, a community solar ("Shared Solar") program was adopted via legislation for customers of the state's primary investor-owned utility, Dominion Energy. Earlier this year, Governor Youngkin signed legislation to grow the Dominion program and establish a new program in Appalachian Power's (ApCo) service territory in southwest Virginia. As a result of this legislation, Dimension is making \$150



million in capital expenditures in Virginia, where nearly 10,000 low-income households will soon benefit from over \$50 million in energy bill savings.

Community solar achieves several things for Virginia. First, it deploys new energy generators in a way that fits with the state's agricultural landscape; 30-acre projects fit well with the local landscape and desires of local communities. Second, it provides an opportunity to keep family farms in operation by providing steady revenue to farmers. Finally, it creates competition without deregulation: Dominion and ApCo are still the energy service providers, but private capital can be deployed to help meet the state's energy shortfall while providing savings to customers. All of these benefits are relevant to our home state.

House Bill 1152 grabbed Dimension's attention as it would create the open marketplace we need to build projects and serve customers at home in Georgia. We see this ad hoc committee as an important forum to address concerns with the legislation so that the bill's vision can be realized in the coming session. My colleagues and I stand ready to assist you and your colleagues as you determine how to bring community solar to the Peach State.

Sincerely,

Brandon Smithwood
Vice President, Policy
Dimension Energy

