



In the Matter of the Community Solar Energy Program Docket No. QO22030153

On behalf of Sustainable South Jersey, I am writing to support the Community Solar Energy Program and its transition to a permanent Program.

Sustainable South Jersey (SSJ) advocates for switching to renewable energy sources and away from fossil fuels. SSJ has partnered with two Community Solar organizations (Neighborhood Sun and Solar Landscape). SSJ has promoted community solar and received donations for subscriber referrals. Since community solar aligns with our core values, SSJ also promotes community solar for other organizations where any financial benefits went to others.

The benefits my organization and our community members have received from community solar are at risk if the BPU does not implement the following as part of the Permanent Program:

1. **The BPU should continue to award community solar projects through a competitive scoring process.** My organization has seen an extraordinary level of support (financial and otherwise) from solar companies as a direct result of those companies' competing for my organization's partnership to score points on their project applications. And my organization's constituents have been direct beneficiaries of discounts and other perks from solar companies wanting to win over customers. Changing to a first-come-first-served project-selection process would eliminate these substantial benefits of the competitive process.
2. **The BPU should award more community solar projects.** Community solar projects provide real, tangible benefits to my organization and my organization's constituents, many of whom cannot benefit from traditional residential solar (e.g., because they do not own their homes and/or live in buildings without suitable rooftops). Community solar is the best – and, in many cases, only – way for my community members to get the savings and other benefits of green energy. We need more community solar.
3. **The BPU should reduce barriers to low-income and moderate-income (LMI) subscribers.** Households that have "low income" or "moderate income" should be able to qualify as LMI customers for community solar without needing to jump through invasive hoops (e.g., proving that they are on food stamps). If someone swears in writing that he or she qualifies as having low income or moderate income, that should be enough. Asking for more deters residents from wanting to sign up for the community solar program.

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to continuing to promote clean energy equity in our community.

Sincerely,

Edward Cohen, Board President of Sustainable South Jersey