

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Ben Hueso, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 288 (Wiener) Solar Bill of Rights —SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hueso:

The California Alliance for Community Energy writes to voice our strong support for SB 288, the Solar Bill of Rights.

The Alliance is a statewide advocacy coalition representing the ratepayers and communities that participate in Community Choice energy programs across California. In particular, the Alliance works to support and defend Community Choice programs that advance local clean energy for the environmental, economic, and social justice benefit of our communities.

SB 288 enshrines a simple concept – that Californians should be able to benefit from electricity generated by renewable resources on their own property. To this end, SB 288 mandates removal of a number of barriers that currently impede implementation of local distributed energy resources. We agree with SB 288 – not only should customers installing clean energy systems be able to use the electricity they generate and easily interconnect with the grid, but they should also be compensated fairly for the grid-support services, grid resiliency, and other economic benefits that their renewable energy project provides.

More specifically, SB288 requires that utilities update both their interconnection procedures and the tariffs that compensate customers for their installation and use of distributed clean energy technologies. Central to these updates is a requirement that customers be able to pair their on-site renewables with energy storage devices. This pairing is particularly vital as California seeks to build out electricity infrastructure that is more resilient in the face of wildfires, windstorms, flooding and the other ravages of climate change for which we must now plan.

As you know, Community Choice energy programs seek to provide reliable, clean and affordable power while addressing local community needs. As of 2019, 19 such programs serve over 11 million customers and have built over 2000 MW of new clean energy facilities. With passage of SB 288, Community Choice programs will be able to accelerate the growth of decentralized energy projects in our communities, where the jobs and other social benefits represented by these technologies can be reaped by all.

In short, the California Alliance for Community Energy sees widespread benefit to our communities through passage of SB 288, particularly in concert with the growing statewide network of Community Choice agencies. As the centralized utility model plays out its final inning, we see the locally-run, community-guided Community Choice programs as builders of the decentralized energy system of the future. SB 288 will help speed that transition.

For the above reasons, we find SB 288 to be a vital part of California's rapidly emerging energy restructuring. We urge the Committee to support this Bill and to vote it out with a strong recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al Weinrub". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Al Weinrub
Coordinator, California Alliance for Community Energy

Cc: Assemblymember Chris Holden, Chair, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy
Nidia Bautista, Chief Consultant, Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications
Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications
Senator John M. W. Moorlach, Vice Chair
Senator Steven Bradford
Senator Bill Dodd
Senator Robert M. Hertzberg
Senator Jerry Hill
Senator Mike McGuire
Senator Susan Rubio
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Henry I. Stern
Senator Jeff Stone
Senator Scott D. Wiener