

Beverly Jones Heydinger – Chair
Nancy Lange – Commissioner
Dan Lipschultz – Commissioner
John Tuma – Commissioner
Betsy Wergin – Commissioner

RE: MPUC Docket #E002/M-13-867

June 10, 2015

Dear Public Utilities Commissioners:

We are writing you today in support of the community solar program currently being discussed at the Public Utilities Commission. As public housing agencies and affordable housing non-profits we not only provide homes for tens of thousands of individuals and families, but also critical services that help our clients achieve stability and self-reliance. We work with Minnesotans of all ages from a wide variety of backgrounds, but the one thing they all have in common is the right to a secure home where they can connect to the community around them.

The nature of our organizations does present some challenges when providing services for individuals and families in our homes. For instance, our non-profit status means we are unable to take advantage of the various tax incentive programs if we wished to provide part of the energy used in our homes through rooftop solar panels. These challenges make community solar the only real option for providing local, renewable energy for our residents.

This issue becomes even more critical when you consider the impacts of emissions and pollutants on low income and minority Minnesotans. Research by the University of Minnesota has shown that low income neighborhoods around the country, and the Twin Cities metro area specifically, deal with significant disparities in the concentration of pollutants. By creating a local, renewable energy option for low income Minnesotans, we can tackle those disparities head-on by reducing the need for energy produced through the burning of fossil fuels.

While all Minnesotans deserve the opportunity to have some personal ownership of Minnesota's transition to a clean energy economy, our residents will likely not get that opportunity without programs like community solar. By moving forward with Xcel Energy's community solar program, you will be providing an opportunity for all Minnesotans to personally invest in a clean, homegrown energy economy.

Respectfully,

Alan Arthur
President & CEO
Aeon

Gina Ciganik
VP of Housing Development
Aeon

Darielle Dannen
Public Policy Director
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers

Jim Erchul
Executive Director
Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services

Rick Goodemann
Executive Director
Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

Chip Halbach
Executive Director
Minnesota Housing Partnership