

**From:** [Kyle Makarios](#)  
**To:** [Staff, CAO \(PUC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Sherco Solar project Docket Number: E-002/M-20-891  
**Date:** Friday, April 8, 2022 1:03:58 PM  
**Attachments:** [UNIDOS MN comments on Sherco Solar project.pdf](#)

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Please see the attached comments from Unidos MN regarding the Sherco Solar Project, Docket Number E-002/M-20-891.

Thank you,

Kyle Makarios, on behalf of Unidos MN  
651-341-4406

April 8, 2022

Mr. Will Seuffert  
Executive Secretary  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Xcel Energy Sherco Solar Acquisition

*In the Matter of the Petition of Xcel Energy for Approval of the Acquisition of Solar Generation at Xcel Energy's Sherburne County Site.*

PUC Docket Number: E-002/M-20-891

Dear Mr. Seuffert,

Unidos MN wishes to offer the following comments into the record for Minnesota Public Utilities Commission consideration of a petition by Xcel Energy to build and operate a large solar farm in Becker, Minnesota to replace power from the Sherco coal plant with clean, renewable energy.

Unidos MN is a grassroots organization rooted in immigrant and first-generation youth and the broader Latino community that works to advance social, racial and economic justice for all. We are advocates for the transition to clean, renewable energy, and applaud this project proposed by Xcel Energy.

We also strongly support approval of the Sherco Solar project because it will provide dozens of opportunities for individuals from BIPOC communities in the Twin Cities and St. Cloud area to pursue middle-class careers in clean energy. People of color, immigrants and women are currently underrepresented in the energy industry. Unidos MN is currently partnering with the Minnesota Building Trades Council's Building Strong Communities program and specific union apprenticeship programs to prepare people of color for meaningful careers in the Trades.

Sherco Solar will create hundreds of construction jobs and career opportunities through registered apprenticeship programs operated by Minnesota Building Trades unions and their contractor partners. Xcel and building trades unions that will participate in the project have committed to working with community organizations like ours to ensure that BIPOC community members have access to these jobs through Xcel's workforce pilot program, which was recently approved by MPUC.

If Sherco Solar is approved, it will be an important step toward equity and inclusion in the clean energy economy. If the project is not approved, we are concerned that it will end up being replaced by others that do not offer the same benefits, because the projects could be located far from the Twin Cities, and because we cannot be sure that the owners will make a similar commitment to inclusion and equity.

Commissioners have previously indicated a commitment to pursue greater equity and inclusion in the energy utility industry; this is an opportunity to follow through on that commitment by investing in a truly just transition.

Thank you for your attention,

*Emilia Gonzalez Avalos*

Emilia Gonzalez Avalos  
Executive Director