March 14, 2016

Honorable Brian S. Dempsey
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Thomas A. Golden
State House, Room 473B
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Bradley H. Jones
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H.3854/S.2058 An Act providing for the establishment of a comprehensive adaptation management plan in response to climate change

Dear Chairman Dempsey, Chairman Golden and Minority Leader Jones:

We wish to express our appreciation for your efforts to pass legislation that seeks to promote cost-effective solar energy growth and sets the Commonwealth on a path to meet its Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) requirements.

Following the vote on H.3854 in November, our offices have been contacted by constituents, municipalities and businesses that are concerned this legislation will lead to job losses, jeopardize environmental progress, and raise electricity bills. We respectfully request that you address these critical issues in the Conference Committee, and that the committee report a bill to raise the net metering caps as expeditiously as possible.

In particular, we are concerned that sharp cuts to net metering credit value will irreparably harm Massachusetts’ solar industry and its 15,000 employees. Resenting all new solar projects to the wholesale net metering credit rate will make it prohibitively difficult to finance low-income, community shared solar or municipal projects. In addition, the transition to the wholesale rate for existing projects, while 20 years down the road, will lead to major bill increases for municipalities and other solar customers. Finally, we have heard significant concerns about the provision creating a “minimum monthly reliability contribution” and the impacts that could have on existing solar customers and future solar growth.

In our view, a strong net metering policy, at a minimum, calls for maintaining retail net metering credit value for preferred classes of projects, such as (1) community shared solar, (2) projects that serve low-income housing and low-income ratepayers and (3) municipalities until an official, publicly scrutinized analysis of costs and benefits has been completed. In addition, we ask the Conference Committee to ensure grandfathering of existing systems. We also are in favor of the inclusion of new or expanded programs to achieve solar equity for low-income residents.

We support your desire to reduce costs. However, it is important to note that net metering credits are not subsidies, but rather compensation for the value provided by solar generation exported to the grid. The
state's Massachusetts Net Metering & Solar Task Force determined last year that for every dollar solar costs ratepayers, it returns $2.20 in benefits. Therefore, we hope you will look to reduce costs not by arbitrarily cutting the net metering credit value, but rather by reforming the SREC program, which was designed to be an incentive for solar development.

We hope you can advance a bill to a floor vote at the earliest opportunity, in order to restore investments in our communities and allow businesses to rehire workers who lost their jobs as a result of the net metering caps. Even more urgency has been added now that the Department of Energy Resources has reported that SREC II has reached full capacity, so we must make progress on a successor program. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Cory Atkins
14th Middlesex

Jennifer E. Benson
37th Middlesex

Kay Khan
11th Middlesex

Smitty Pignatelli
4th Berkshire

Brian Ashe
2nd Hampden

Christine P. Barber
34th Middlesex

Best Regards,

Ruth B. Balser
12th Middlesex

Marjorie C. Decker
25th Middlesex

James J. O'Day
14th Worcester

James Arciero
2nd Middlesex

Bruce Ayers
1st Norfolk

Paul Brodeur
32nd Middlesex
Antonio F. D. Cabral
13th Bristol

Kate D. Campanale
17th Worcester

James M. Cantwell
4th Plymouth

Evandro C. Carvalho
5th Suffolk

Edward F. Coppinger
10th Suffolk

Daniel Cullinane
12th Suffolk

Diana DiZoglio
14th Essex

Shawn Dooley
9th Norfolk

Thomas J. Calter
12th Plymouth

Linda Dean Campbell
15th Essex

Gailanne M. Cariddi
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Nick Collins
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Brendan P. Crighton
11th Essex

Michael S. Day
31st Middlesex

Daniel M. Donahue
16th Worcester

Michelle M. DuBois
10th Plymouth
James J. Dywer
30th Middlesex

Lori A. Ehrlich
8th Essex

Kim N. Fagan
Kimberly N. Ferguson
1st Worcester

Michael J. Finn
6th Hampden

Gloria L. Fox
7th Suffolk

Paul K. Frost
7th Worcester

Denise C. Garlick
13th Norfolk

Carolyn C. Dykema
8th Middlesex

Tricia Farley-Bouvier
3rd Berkshire

Ann-Margaret Ferrante
5th Essex

Carole A. Fiola
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Colleen M. Garry
36th Middlesex
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13th Middlesex

Sheila C. Harrington  
1st Middlesex

Paul Heroux  
2nd Bristol

Kate Hogan  
3rd Middlesex

Kevin G. Honan  
17th Suffolk

Hannah Kane  
11th Worcester

Mary S. Keefe  
15th Worcester

Peter V. Kocot  
1st Hampshire

Kenneth I. Gordon  
21st Middlesex

Jonathan Hecht  
29th Middlesex

Bradford R. Hill  
4th Essex

Russell E. Holmes  
6th Suffolk

Louis L. Kafka  
8th Norfolk

Jay R. Kaufman  
15th Middlesex

James M. Kelcourse  
1st Essex

Robert M. Koczera  
11th Bristol
Matthew Muratore  
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Angelo J. Puppolo  
12th Hampden

Jeffrey A. Roy  
10th Norfolk

Jeffrey Sánchez  
15th Suffolk

Paul A. Schmid  
8th Bristol

Alan Silvia  
7th Bristol

Thomas M. Stanley  
5th Middlesex

William M. Straus  
10th Bristol

Denise Provost  
27th Middlesex

David M. Rogers  
24th Middlesex

Daniel J. Ryan  
2nd Suffolk

Tom Sannicandro  
7th Middlesex

John W. Seibak  
2nd Hampshire

Frank I. Smizik  
15th Norfolk

Ellen Story  
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Benjamin Swan  
11th Hampden
Walter F. Timilty  
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Jose F. Tosado  
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Steven Ultrino  
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John C. Velis  
4th Hampden

Chris Walsh  
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Timothy J. Toomey  
26th Middlesex

Paul Tucker  
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Aaron Vega  
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RoseLee Vincent  
16th Suffolk

Jonathan D. Zlotnik  
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