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. Resetting 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

Ruth B. Balser
12th Middlesex

Marjorie C. Decker
25th Middlesex

James 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  
1st Berkshire

Nick Collins  
4th Suffolk

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

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
6th Bristol

Frank A. Moran
17th Essex

Sean Garballey
23rd Middlesex

Colleen M. Garry
36th Middlesex
Carmine L. Gentile
13th Middlesex

Sheila C. Harrington
1st Middlesex

Paul R. 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 B. Holmes
6th Suffolk

Louis L. Kafka
8th Norfolk

Jay R. Kaufman
15th Middlesex

James M. Kelcourse
1st Essex

Robert M. Koczera
11th Bristol
Stephen Kulik  
1st Franklin

Jay D. Livingstone  
8th Suffolk

Adrian Madaro  
1st Suffolk

John J. Mahoney  
13th Worcester

Brian R. Mannal  
2nd Barnstable

Christopher M. Markey  
9th Bristol

Leonard Mirra  
2nd Essex

John J. Lawn  
10th Middlesex

James P. Lyons  
18th Essex

Timothy R. Madden  
Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket

Elizabeth A. Malia  
11th Suffolk

Paul W. Mark  
2nd Berkshire

Paul McMurtry  
11th Norfolk

David K. Muradian  
9th Worcester
Matthew Muratore  
11th Plymouth

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  
9th 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  
3rd Hampshire

Benjamin Swan  
11th Hampden
Walter F. Timilty
7th Norfolk

Jose F. Tosado
9th Hampden

Steven Ultrino
33rd Middlesex

John C. Velis
4th Hampden

Chris Walsh
6th Middlesex

Timothy J. Toomey
26th Middlesex

Paul Tucker
7th Essex

Aaron Vega
5th Hampden

RoseLee Vincent
16th Suffolk

Jonathan D. Zlotnik
2nd Worcester