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SENATE MEMORIAL 63

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020

INTRODUCED BY

Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO ARRANGE FOR A
THIRD-PARTY FACILITATOR TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW
STATEWIDE COMMUNITY SOLAR INITIATIVES AND DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE INITIATIVES.

WHEREAS, solar energy production installations convert
energy from sunlight into electricity through the use of
photovoltaics or concentrated solar power; and

WHEREAS, solar energy is an environmentally friendly
renewable energy source that can help reduce electricity bills
and has diverse applications; and

WHEREAS, solar energy production has risen over the course
of the past several years, and this trend is expected to
continue; and

WHEREAS, by the middle of 2018, five and three-tenths

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1 gigawatts of solar capacity had been installed in the United
2 States, producing enough energy to power eleven million homes;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, employment in the solar energy sector more than
5 doubled between 2010 and 2017, from approximately ninety-three
6 thousand to two hundred fifty thousand jobs; and

7 WHEREAS, in 2017, thirty-two percent of households in New
8 Mexico were renting, and thirty percent of those households
9 fell below the federal poverty line; and

10 WHEREAS, rooftop solar is generally not affordable nor
11 accessible to low-income families and renters; and

12 WHEREAS, community solar allows for low-income families
13 and renters to access solar energy and reduce their electricity
14 bills; and

15 WHEREAS, nineteen states and the District of Columbia have
16 policies and programs supporting community solar development;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, with its abundance of sunshine, New Mexico is
19 among the states that can derive the greatest benefits from
20 solar energy production; and

21 WHEREAS, community solar initiatives would allow for local
22 governments, multiple individuals and entities to share the
23 benefits of a single solar facility to which they subscribe and
24 obtain monetary credit on their utility bills for a portion of
25 the solar power produced; and

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1 WHEREAS, participation and recommendations from the
2 energy, minerals and natural resources department, the public
3 regulation commission, utility companies, electric
4 cooperatives, renewable energy industry representatives, Indian
5 nations, tribes and pueblos, low-income service providers,
6 local governments and community members from all regions of the
7 state would be a key component to the success of community
8 solar initiatives statewide;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
10 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be
11 requested to arrange for a third-party facilitator to convene a
12 working group no later than March 21, 2020 to review statewide
13 community solar initiatives and develop recommendations for
14 implementation of those initiatives that result in a
15 sustainable and scalable market-based program for the state of
16 New Mexico; provided that the third-party facilitator shall
17 facilitate without compensation from the state; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be composed
19 of representatives from the energy, minerals and natural
20 resources department; the public regulation commission; utility
21 companies; electric cooperatives; renewable energy industry
22 representatives; the New Mexico municipal league; environmental
23 organizations; Indian nations, tribes and pueblos; low-income
24 service providers; and local governments, cities, counties and
25 interested community members from throughout the state; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be requested
2 to report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate
3 interim legislative committee by October 1, 2020; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
5 transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative
6 council.