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Rep. Krug, Sen. Testin Introduce Community Solar Legislation to Lower Energy Bills and Expand Local Control

Wausau, WI – Today, State Senator Pat Testin (R-Stevens Point) and State Representative Scott Krug (R-Rome)—joined by JD Smith Head of Business Development for Arch Electric and Rick Beyers, a local landowner and community solar advocate—introduced proposals to allow community solar programs in Wisconsin. The legislation empowers farmers and solar developers to deliver locally generated power to neighboring subscribers, strengthening grid reliability and cutting energy costs for families hit hardest by rising utility bills.

Through community solar, farmers can lease small, unproductive portions of their land for solar projects, creating new income streams while expanding access to affordable energy for their neighbors. Currently, the power to approve or decline most energy projects rests with the state's Public Service Commission (PSC). This top-down approach deprives voters control over development in their local community..

Community solar returns power to the people by giving local municipalities and towns control over siting and approval for solar projects in their jurisdictions. Wisconsin is a net importer of energy and currently has some of the most expensive energy costs in the Midwest. By creating more competition in the market, community solar will expand energy options, keep utility spending in check, and drive down high energy prices in the Badger State.

"Wisconsin once enjoyed some of the lowest utility bills in the Midwest, and now our rates are near the highest, leaving families and businesses struggling with soaring costs. This legislation is designed to directly address those rising energy prices by expanding access to locally generated, affordable power. Just as importantly, it ensures that communities themselves are in the driver's seat, with a meaningful role in deciding where and how these projects are built," said State Senator Pat Testin (R-Stevens Point).

“My constituents are tired of these massive solar projects that span thousands of acres, for which they have no voice. That’s why the small scale of these projects–combined with local control and oversight–is such an important part of this legislation. Wisconsin residents would have a direct say in the approval process for smaller community solar projects that can be built on 20-30 acres, keeping land and resources in our family farms,” said State Representative Scott Krug (R-Rome).

A diverse group of stakeholders from across Wisconsin has joined together to support Rep. Krug and Sen. Testin’s efforts to bring community solar to the state. The group includes: Walmart, Advocate Aurora Health, Organic Valley, RENEW Wisconsin, Associated Builders and Contractors, Land & Liberty Coalition, Wisconsin Grocers Association, Kohler, Faith Technologies, Arch Electric, Wisconsin Conservative Energy Forum, Wisconsin Farm Bureau, and Coalition for Community Solar Access. For more information about the coalition, visit Our Sun. Our Power. Wisconsin.

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