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## **Statement: As 100 House members speak out for solar, it's time for Speaker DeLeo to act**

*Boston* – As a standoff over a key solar energy program drags on into its twelfth month, halting solar projects across Massachusetts, 100 state representatives sent a letter to members of a legislative Conference Committee today asking them to ensure the continued growth of solar.

“A year is too long to wait for solar power,” said Ben Hellerstein, State Director for Environment Massachusetts. “Today, a clear majority of House members are voicing their support for solar. It’s time for Speaker Robert DeLeo and other House leaders to act.”

The letter was written in response to House Bill 3854, passed in November. The bill would cut solar net metering credits by 75% for most types of projects and impose a minimum charge on solar owners.

The letter garnered wide support from legislators, including Democrats and Republicans, as well as 22 members serving as committee chairs and other leadership positions.

In the letter, House members express concern with proposed cuts to solar net metering credits, which “will make it prohibitively difficult” to build community solar projects and solar installations serving municipalities and low-income families. The letter urges legislative leaders to act immediately to lift the caps on solar and avoid making arbitrary cuts to solar credits.

“This letter, co-signed by a large majority of House members, demonstrates the urgency of this issue,” said Emily Norton, Chapter Director for the Massachusetts Sierra Club. “15,000 Massachusetts jobs are at risk if the legislature does not act. We know the House leadership shares our commitment to acting on climate change. But the details matter and that means maintaining the retail reimbursement rate, no new minimum bill, a new SREC incentive program, and eliminating the net metering caps once and for all.”

Last March, communities served by National Grid hit the state’s cap on net metering, a program that allows solar panel owners to receive fair credit for the electricity

they provide to the grid. As a result of the cap, many businesses, local governments, and nonprofits are now unable to move forward with solar projects.

Businesses and families hoping to switch to solar were dealt another setback this February, as key incentives known as Solar Renewable Energy Credits or SRECs expired. The state has not yet announced a replacement for the SREC program.

Earlier this week, 32 mayors and top municipal officials, led by Mayor Setti Warren of Newton, sent a letter to legislative leaders urging them to preserve the full value of net metering credits. According to Mayor Warren's letter, cuts to the value of net metering credits would prevent city and town governments from moving forward with proposed solar installations — including a community solar project in Newton that will expand access to solar for low-income families and those who can't install solar panels on their roofs.

"Solar has a critical role to play in the fight against global warming," said Hellerstein. "Speaker DeLeo has a choice to make: Will he allow this legislative logjam to drag on into a second year? Or will he move us closer to a future powered by 100% clean, local, renewable energy?"