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KEVIN A. CAHILL
Assemblymember 101ST District
CHAIR
Assembly Ethics and Guidance Committee

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August 22, 2007

Honorable Jaclyn A. Brilling, Secretary
New York State Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223-1350

RE: PSC-18-07-00011-P Comments in Support of Raising the Ceiling for Net Metering In the Central Hudson Utility Territory and Requesting Expedited Action

Dear Secretary Brilling:

I write in support of the petition filed by the New York Solar Energy Industries Association and Sustainable Hudson Valley seeking to raise the cap on net metered solar energy in the Central Hudson service territory to 3 MW. Increased investment in clean, renewable energy systems will lessen our collective carbon footprint, improve public health, enhance air quality and diversify our energy portfolio therefore enhancing reliability while providing increased power generation at times of peak demand. Expediting this proposal is clearly in the public interest.

In March of this year, Central Hudson reached its net metering limit of 1.2 MW and stopped accepting new applications for net metered residential solar systems. The Commission subsequently increased the cap to 1.8 MW, a limit that solar installers expect to meet before the close of the year. This should come as no surprise. An examination of the data on residential participants in the New York Energy Smart PV Incentive Program shows that the 189 installations in the Central Hudson service territory have a capacity to generate just over 1.2 MW -- 29% of the 4.2 MW capacity statewide, greater than any other eligible service area.

Central Hudson's opposition to the proposed 3 MW cap on net metering is disappointing. As a leader in promoting renewable energy, the utility must surely understand that the growing photovoltaic industry is creating well paying jobs in the Hudson Valley and turning the region into a hot spot for investment in solar technology. The imminent arrival of the Solar Energy Consortium in Kingston -- a project with which Central Hudson is integrally involved -- promises an exponential increase in employment opportunities for researchers, designers, manufacturers and installers. By focusing on the minimal immediate impact the expansion will have on their bottom line, Central Hudson is failing to recognize the long term economic benefit of promoting the Hudson Valley as a hub for solar innovation and development. Raising the net metering cap to 3 MW would be a modest step towards that goal.

Expanding net metering in the Central Hudson service territory is certainly consistent with Governor Spitzer's goals to stimulate economic growth, increase energy diversity and protect the environment and public health through the promotion of clean, renewable power. The petition before you is clearly beneficial to the public interest and I urge its expedited approval. As always, I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin A. Cahill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue rectangular highlight behind it.

Kevin A. Cahill
Member of Assembly

KAC:cb

cc: Honorable Patricia L. Acampora, Chairwoman
Honorable Cheryl A. Buley, Commissioner
Honorable Robert E. Curry, Jr., Commissioner
Honorable Maureen F. Harris, Commissioner