Memorandum of Support

May 27, 2015

A.107-A (Paulin)*/S.3544 (Griffo)*
*not same as

Title: An Act to amend the executive law, the public service law and the public authorities law, in relation to shared renewable facilities

Summary: This bill will allow for the interconnection and operation of shared solar and wind facilities to the benefit of consumers that may not have access to suitable renewable energy generation sites.

Explanation: New York State has all the potential to be a world leader in photovoltaic production and wind energy generation. The New York Sun Program, a ten-year, 1.5 billion dollar investment in solar projects is the primary vehicle to jumpstart this renewable energy revolution. But a large portion of New York’s home and business owners do not have access to suitable solar installation sites – or may jointly share roof or parking lots with other entities – making it difficult to partake in the solar stimulus and benefits of owning a renewable energy system.

A.107-A addresses this problem by providing energy consumers with the option to enter into cooperative clean energy agreements with other owners of renewable energy systems in their communities – and for their shared investment in a solar array or wind energy generation site they receive a credit for their share of the clean energy produced. This arrangement could be transformative for New York’s urban areas – where there are typically expanses of unused roof space and high demand for electricity, especially on hot days in the summertime when air conditioners drive system demand to peak load.

Peak load in New York means the use of our dirtiest fossil fuel plants to satisfy the electrical demands of consumers. But with more photovoltaic panels on roofs, over parking lots and in back yards, the hottest days of the year may see the greatest renewable energy output – meaning a more reliable electrical grid, cleaner air quality and lower electric bills for consumers. Allowing for this new arrangement of share solar facilities will unlock private investment in the new utility web of community owned renewable energy, which in turn will create jobs and drive innovation for new products and technologies.

Polls show that a majority of New Yorkers are concerned about climate change and are enthusiastic about participating and supporting in renewable energy development as a solution. A.107-A will give all New Yorkers the opportunity to benefit from the State’s growing clean energy programs, even if they do not own property or a suitable site for renewable energy development.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter strongly urges your support of this legislation.

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