SENATE MEMORIAL 63

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

INTRODUCED BY

Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics and Patricia Roybal Caballero

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, community solar initiatives would allow for local governments, multiple individuals and entities to share the benefits of a single solar facility to which they subscribe and obtain monetary credit on their utility bills for a portion of the solar power produced; and
WHEREAS, participation and recommendations from the energy, minerals and natural resources department, the public regulation commission, utility companies, electric cooperatives, renewable energy industry representatives, Indian nations, tribes and pueblos, low-income service providers, local governments and community members from all regions of the state would be a key component to the success of community solar initiatives statewide;

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

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

.217553.1
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be requested to report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee by October 1, 2020; and

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

- 4 -