

RENEW Wisconsin: Legislation would make solar financing options available to all

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MADISON, WI – Today, Senator Rob Cowles (R – Green Bay) and Representative Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R – Appleton) introduced legislation that would clarify using a lease, sometimes known as third-party financing, to acquire a solar array is legal in Wisconsin. RENEW Wisconsin and the members of the [Wisconsin Solar Coalition](#) applaud the introduction of this legislation and urge other legislators to support it.

“This legislation will expand access to solar energy in Wisconsin by allowing businesses and homeowners a basic financing option available in other states. Decades of Wisconsin case law and statutes allow for solar leasing or third-party financing,” said RENEW Wisconsin Executive Director Heather Allen. “However, over the past several years, some utilities have challenged solar installations with third-party financing structures. Since the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin and courts have avoided clarifying the law, it is up to the legislature. Without clarity, Wisconsinites lack access to all of the financing options they need to meet their clean energy goals, create jobs, and manage energy bills while improving the resiliency of the electric grid. Wisconsin must affirm the legality of third-party financing to facilitate the shift to clean energy for everyone.”

Across the country, leasing equipment is one of the most often used financing methods for distributed solar. This legislation is an opportunity to provide greater access to affordable, emission-free electricity for all Wisconsinites. Clarifying this law will positively impact many individuals, businesses, and organizations.

“As a building design consultant serving health care and educational clients, I see a tremendous appetite to utilize third-party financing to develop renewable energy projects, microgrids, and heat and power installations to drive down operational costs and increase resiliency, said Mike Barnett at HGA Architects and Engineers. He added, “Unfortunately, in Wisconsin, there is no legal clarity surrounding third-party financing. If the legislature clarified the legality of third-party financing, these types of capital investment projects and associated jobs would dramatically increase.”

Niels Wolter of Madison Solar Consulting said, “I have many not-for-profit and public (i.e., governmental) clients doing amazing work. They would love to do solar projects but don’t qualify for tax incentives. Third-party financing would be an amazing solution for them to generate solar power, reduce their operating costs and teach their communities about renewables.”

Allen added, “This is a simple question of giving individuals, businesses, and organizations the solar financing options that work best for them.”