

Sen. Cowles: Applauds the PSC's decision to advance petition on solar energy financing

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GREEN BAY- Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement in response to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin's (PSC) 2 - 1 vote during today's [Open Meeting](#) to allow a Petition for Declaratory Ruling from Vote Solar to advance to the discovery and hearing process:

"Wisconsin's failure to address the legality of third-party financing of distributed energy resources over the past decade has left us at a disadvantage compared to other states, including our neighboring states in the Midwest. It's long past time we recognize that a financing arrangement for a homeowner, church, farm, or small business does not infringe on the regulated monopoly utility model in Wisconsin. You can finance anything from a new water heater to energy efficient windows to help reduce your energy consumption, and there's no reason you shouldn't be able to do the same to generate your own rooftop solar electricity."

Third-party financing agreements come in [different forms](#), but the underlying goal of these arrangements is to allow a property owner - including homeowners, business owners, religious institution leaders, local units of government, and nonprofit leaders - to have the upfront cost of a distributed energy resource such as rooftop solar panels covered by a third-party and paid-off overtime. Many other states have third-party financing arrangements for distributed energy resources happening currently, including at least seven other states which have had their energy utility regulatory bodies similar to the PSC authorize third-party financing. All of Wisconsin's neighboring states (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota) authorize a form of third-party financing arrangements.

"I'm pleased to see that the petition for a declaratory ruling will continue through to the proceeding process. I'd like to express my thanks to all of the groups which

have supported this petition thus far, many of which were also engaged in supporting the bill I authored on third-party financing earlier this session. I look forward to monitoring the upcoming proceedings, and hope the Commissioners hear the facts and logic that will encourage them to acknowledge the legality of third-party financing arrangements in Wisconsin.”

In June, Senator Cowles authored a [letter of support](#) for the Petition for a Declaratory Ruling from Vote Solar ([PSC Docket ID: 9300-DR-106](#)). Senator Cowles also authored legislation during the 2021-22 Legislative Session, [2021 Senate Bill 702](#), to begin the conversation on third-party financing in the State Legislature.