



## Impactful Citizen Lobbying



# Our Theory of Change



# The role of citizen lobbyists in shaping policy

People who have a stake in the clean energy economy are highly motivated and compelling advocates for clean energy policies.



# Strengthening the voices of solar homeowners



Bringing solar homeowners' *unique perspective* to lobby for pro-solar policies is a key part of our mission.

# Citizen Lobbying

- What is Lobbying?
  - getting what you want by advocating to the people with the power to give it to you.
- Does grassroots lobbying work?
  - YES!



# How does a bill become law?

- ✓ A bill = proposed law
- ✓ Assigned to committee which holds public hearings before voting on bill.
- ✓ If bill passes through committee, it goes to the full legislative body for votes.
- ✓ If approved, bill is sent to the Governor to sign.
- ✓ If the Governor vetoes, legislators can vote again to override the veto.



# Levels of citizen lobbying



# Before Contacting Your Representatives

- ✓ Learn about their background, and solar and energy voting record (ask us).
- ✓ Prepare what you want to say, starting with your personal story about how the bill solves a problem or impacts your family, community, or business.
- ✓ Remember that your story will make a greater impact than presenting facts about the bill.

# Tips when mailing or calling your representatives

- ✓ Address them by their proper title
  - ✓ Representative Smith
- ✓ Identify yourself by:
  - ✓ Name, Town, Profession and, if relevant to the issue, Organizational affiliation
- ✓ Identify the bill by number and title



# Citizen Lobbying

- ✓ State how you would like your rep. to vote
  - ✓ Explain how the bill would affect you, your family, business, and/or community.
- ✓ If the representative opposes
  - ✓ Express disappointment
  - ✓ Ask what info/questions they need to reconsider position and follow up ASAP with info (ask us for help)
- ✓ If representative supports
  - ✓ Express gratitude and ask to co-sponsor bill and urge colleagues to support

## More Tips

- ✓ Be politely assertive and use a professional tone. Try not to express anger or threaten.
- ✓ One of the goals of communicating is to build an ongoing and productive constituent-representative relationship.
- ✓ Send a follow-up thank you email after your meeting

# Lobbying in Person

- ✓ Meeting in person with your representative is usually the most impactful way to lobby.
- ✓ Request meeting (at least one week ahead) at their legislative office or in district.
- ✓ If your legislator is not available, ask to meet with a staffer/legislative aide.



# Preparing for the meeting

- ✓ To prepare, see previous suggestions for calling/emailing your representatives.
- ✓ Good idea to have a one-page talking points.
- ✓ Don't bring a lot of written material to leave with the legislators; if you do, it should be no more than 1-2 pages.

# During the Meeting

- ✓ Allow opportunities for legislators to speak about their positions and concerns.
- ✓ Take brief notes as long as it's not distracting.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer to a question...
  - ✓ Say so, and offer to find the answer and provide it to the legislator later. (Ask us for help)
- ✓ Close meeting by thanking for the opportunity and say that you will send a follow-up email.

## If your representative disagrees...

- ✓ Calmly express your disappointment and ask what kind of information would be needed for them to reconsider. Offer to send more information via email.
- ✓ Solar United Neighbors can assist you in obtaining this information.
- ✓ If your legislators say they will support
  - ✓ Thank them, ask them to co-sponsor bill, and urge them to encourage their colleagues to follow suit.

# After the meeting...

- ✓ Review/clarify your meeting notes
- ✓ Send follow-up email thanking them for the meeting
  - ✓ Include any requested info
  - ✓ Repeat your ask to support your position



# Writing/Giving Testimony to Committee

- ✓ Email testimony to the committee clerk
- ✓ Tell your personal story! Be specific!
- ✓ Oral testimony is usually restricted to 2-3 minutes
- ✓ Bring enough copies of your written testimony to pass out to the committee just before you speak



# Writing Letters to the Editor (LTE)

- ✓ Before you write your LTE, check the newspaper's word count guidelines (usually around 150 words)
- ✓ Identify the bill, explain why it's important to you and your community, and call on your local legislators by name to support your position
- ✓ It can also be helpful to tie your letter to an article the newspaper previously published

# Solar Advocacy Postcards

- Contacting your state representatives to show your support for solar is an effective way to make change. Use these postcards to tell your legislators why you love solar, why solar is important to you and your community, and what you want them to do to support solar.



# Solar Advocacy Postcards

Step 1: Look up your state representatives

Step 2: Address the post card to your state legislator

Step 3: Craft your personal message!

Step 4: You can leave the post card with us and we'll be glad to mail it for you.



# HB 531/SB 705

## Enable Community Solar!

- Enabling community solar allows all electric utility customers to lower their electric bills with solar energy.
- Dramatically expanding the market for solar would create more solar jobs in the Commonwealth. Solar installer is already the fastest growing job in the country.
- Community solar helps preserve Pennsylvania farms by providing farmers and other rural landowners with stable lease revenue.

# HB 1195/SB 600

## Raise Pennsylvania's Solar Goals!

- Rooftop solar creates good-paying local jobs in the fastest-growing part of the energy economy, creating more economic benefit than large-scale solar development.
- Homeowners who choose to invest in a rooftop solar installation produce substantial savings on their monthly electric bill.
- Studies have shown that rooftop solar can increase home resale value, potentially adding \$15,000 or more to the value of the home.

# Priority Solar Legislation: Enabling Community Solar

- **Community Solar – HB 531/SB**
- **This is a critical period for these bills**
  - **If it doesn't get voted out of committee by end of March, it's dead.**
  - **If it doesn't get voted out of its chamber by end of June, it's dead.**
- **We are so close to victory! We just need:**
  - **you to urge your legislators to co-sponsor and push for a vote**
  - **In-person district office meetings are the most effective tool**
  - **New GOP co-sponsors are especially important**

# Meeting your legislator in person – it works!

- 2 of the 84 HB 531 co-sponsors happened because of our solar advocates
  - Jim Struzzi, R-Indiana County, a district with a large coal-fired power plant supports the community solar bill
  - Mark Longietti, D-Mercer County, a member of the House Coal Caucus, supports the community solar bill
- In-person meetings can happen in their district offices, close to you. Just call the office and ask for a meeting!
- They aren't scary – legislators will very rarely seek to start an argument. They work for you!
- They are fun – it feels good to speak your truth to power
- They may be habit-forming – the more you interact with your legislator, the more they will listen in the future

# Next steps

- ✓ Let us know if you need help connecting with your representatives (meeting, testimony, etc.)
- ✓ Fill out a postcard!
- ✓ Complete an engagement survey saying you want to be involved in advocacy!
- ✓ For help, email [PAteam@solarunitedneighbors.org](mailto:PAteam@solarunitedneighbors.org)



**Learn more at  
[solarunitedneighbors.org](http://solarunitedneighbors.org)**

**Thank You!**