

May 5, 2021

TO: Members of the House Transportation and Local Government Committee

FROM: Emilie Olson, Principal, Advanced Energy Economy (AEE)

SUBJECT: **HB 21-1284 (A. Valdez and Van Winkle): Limit Fee Install Active Solar Energy System – SUPPORT**

Advanced Energy Economy (AEE) **supports** House Bill 1284, which would ensure consistent and fair application of permitting requirements for locally-sited solar energy and “solar energy plus energy storage” projects. AEE is a national association of businesses that are making the energy we use secure, clean, and affordable. AEE is the only industry association in the U.S. that represents the full range of advanced energy technologies and services, both grid-scale and distributed. Advanced energy includes energy efficiency, demand response, energy storage, wind, solar, hydro, nuclear, electric vehicles, and more. Collectively, advanced energy businesses employ more than 68,000 Coloradans statewide.

In 2017, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 17-179 (“Fair Permit Act”) with strong bipartisan support to provide uniformity and reasonable caps on the costs of permitting for renewable energy projects across the state. Unfortunately, this legislation has not been implemented evenly nor as intended, with some local governments exploiting perceived loopholes in order to levy additional fees above the statutory cost caps. HB 1284 seeks to rectify this with important clarifying language that will improve transparent and accountable implementation so renewable energy project investments are not inadvertently disincentivized by excessive and/or arbitrary permitting fees and confusing discrepancies across jurisdictions. This bill also extends the sunset date for the statutory fee limitation by another four years, allowing the fix provided by this legislation to reasonably take effect and provide additional market certainty for households, businesses, and local communities to access these technologies’ value via lower energy costs and increased energy reliability.

For all of these reasons, AEE encourages your “AYE” vote on HB 1284, a straightforward clarification to existing statute that will eliminate unnecessary barriers to the deployment of customer-sited solar energy and solar paired with energy storage projects at a speed and scale consistent with both customer demand statewide and Colorado’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out by email to eolson@aee.net if you have any questions in regards to AEE’s support for this bill.