

2018 Senate Bill 311 Edwards Community Solar Gardens

Reasons to support SB311 Edwards Community Solar Gardens

- Creates the opportunity for true Community Solar Gardens in Virginia where residential homeowners can either own or lease solar panels for the purpose of providing clean renewable solar energy to their homes.
- Creates a goal for 5% of the peak electrical demand to come from Community Solar Garden facilities by 2023 which will grow clean, renewable energy, jobs and the economy.
- Well before the mid-point of the 25 year life of the Community Solar Garden the panels will have paid for themselves. Starting before halfway through the systems life the electricity will be free or at a greatly reduced rate to the subscriber.

In the 2017 General Assembly session a program called “Community Solar” was passed into law. This program allows for a 3rd party through a monopoly utility to sell solar generated electricity to customers. **SB311 is a different approach** where the subscribers own or lease the Community Solar Garden.

The State Corporation Commission is directed to create regulations that will establish goals for the procurement of electricity from community solar gardens. Additional growth goals should be set in each year after 2023.

By 2023 community solar gardens will generate at least five percent of the peak demand for electricity in Virginia based on 2016 peak demand

HB311 for Solar Gardens requires at least 10 subscribers with no one subscriber having more than 40% of the total generating capacity. Ten percent of the capacity will be available low-income residences.

Any customer of a utility will be able to be a subscriber and utilities will not be able to put any subscriber into a different rate class because they subscribe to a Community Solar Garden.

Subscriptions will be transferable and interconnection fees and processes will allow the utility to recover reasonable interconnection costs.

Community solar gardens will have a life of 25 years and for that duration, subscribers will receive a credit on their monthly utility bill relative to their subscription percentage. Excess credit will carry over to future billing periods.

Community solar garden subscriber organizations shall inform the utility which subscribers should be attributed particular percentages of the energy generated and the utility will purchase

any unsubscribed for energy. The SCC will review the plan for purchasing the unsubscribed for energy and consider the cost savings to the utility for the purchase.

Renewable energy certificates shall be the property of the subscriber organization unless the contract states otherwise.

Community solar gardens, subscriber organizations or subscribers are not public utilities and not subject to regulation by the SCC.