



The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Room 907 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Room 932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Re: Creating self-certification and conditional building permit programs for municipal building departments: S.1003/A.6160 and S.1004/A.6242

To the Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the Honorable Carl Heastie,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to offer our enthusiastic support for the passage of S.1003/A.6160 and S.1004/A.6242. These bills would allow municipalities to create programs allowing conditional building permits and self-certification for building permits, alleviating permitting timelines and reducing soft costs for rooftop solar projects across New York State.

A self-certification program would allow a licensed registered architect or professional engineer to inspect construction projects and confirm that the project is in compliance with the applicable codes and regulations. Municipal building departments would be allowed to accept construction documents, certified by an applicant who is a professional architect or professional engineer, for issuance of a certificate of occupancy through the conditional building permit program, eliminating the need for a full examination from the local building department. This creates an expedited permitting process, saving time and resources for the municipality and applicant and allowing new projects to get off the ground quickly.

Consequently, as more projects get off the ground at faster rates, rooftop solar energy systems can be deployed in New York State more quickly, supporting the goals set forth in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. New York State has less than four years to meet the 2025 goal of 6 gigawatts of distributed solar installations, and was still over 3 gigawatts away from achieving that

goal at the end of 2020. S.1003/A.6160 and S.1004/A.6242 will contribute to continued, rapid deployment of clean, renewable solar energy.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the state's economy, and enacting S.1003/A.6160 and S.1004/A.6242 can be one of many steps to facilitating a quick recovery of the state's businesses, both small and large, to boost local investments, create new jobs, and encourage development. Conditional building permits and self-certification would ease the burden on local permitting and building departments, which have been facing a backlog of permits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local governments and municipalities have an opportunity increase efficiency in the building permit process, encouraging development and increasing investments in our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

CC: The Honorable James Gaughran, Chair, NYS Senate Local Governments Committee (Sponsor)

The Honorable Brian Kavanaugh, Chair, NYS Senate Housing Committee

The Honorable Fred Thiele, Chair, NYS Assembly Local Governments Committee

The Honorable Kenneth Zebrowski, Chair, NYS Assembly Governmental Operations Committee

The Honorable Steven Otis, NYS Assembly Sponsor

Sincerely,

Anne Reynolds, Executive Director, **Alliance for Clean Energy New York**

George Povall, Executive Director, **All Our Energy**

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, **Citizens Campaign for the Environment**

Cullen Howe, Senior Attorney and Renewable Energy Advocate, **Natural Resources Defense Council**

Echo Cartwright, Climate Mitigation Director, **The Nature Conservancy**

Julie Tighe, President, **New York League of Conservation Voters**

Shyam Mehta, Executive Director, **New York Solar Energy Industries Association**

Elizabeth Broad, Campaign Director, **New Yorkers for Clean Power**

Gordian Raacke, Executive Director, **Renewable Energy Long Island**

Neal Lewis, Executive Director, **The Sustainability Institute at Molloy College**

Nina Orville, Executive Director, **Sustainable Westchester**

Stephan Roundtree, Northeast Director, **Vote Solar**