

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1547

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DOUG TANSY
BUSINESS MANAGER • FINANCIAL SECRETARY

CECIL COLLEY III
PRESIDENT



February 23, 2026

RE: Opposition to HB 257 – Portable Solar Generation Devices

To Whom it May Concern:

I am the Business Manager of IBEW Local 1547 and am respectfully writing in opposition to HB 257 (Portable Solar Generation Devices) which would exempt “portable solar generation devices” from interconnection requirements and prohibit electrical corporations and publicly owned utilities from requiring approval, notification, registration, or fees associated with their installation and use. We agree with the goal of reducing electricity costs and diversifying generation. However, HB 257 raises significant electrical safety and consumer protection concerns that warrant careful consideration.

To understand the safety concerns surrounding these devices, it is critical to understand how these Plug-In Photovoltaic (PIPV) systems work.

How PIPV Systems Work

PIPV systems differ from traditional solar installations because they are designed for plug-and-play consumer use rather than professional hard-wiring into a home’s main electrical panel. These systems typically consist of one or two solar panels equipped with a microinverter. Instead of connecting to a dedicated circuit, the unit is plugged directly into a standard indoor or outdoor wall outlet, or receptacle. The microinverter converts the direct current (DC) electricity generated by the panels into alternating current (AC) electricity and backfeeds it into the home’s existing branch circuit. That electricity is then used by appliances on the same circuit or elsewhere in the home, reducing the amount of power drawn from the utility grid.

Safety Concerns for PIPV Systems

1. Overcurrent and Fire Hazards

A PIPV source backfeeding a receptacle introduces additional current that is not protected by the upstream panelboard branch circuit overcurrent protective device. Backfeeding branch circuits with two sources of power can overload conductors and provide current to loads on that circuit

beyond their evaluated, tested and certified limits, which could result in a risk of electric shock and fire.¹

2. Touch Safety (Electric Shock)

Most commercially available PIPV products have common 15A power cords with accessible plug pins. Common 15A NEMA 5-15P attachment plug blade terminals, which terminate a power supply cord, were designed to connect a piece of utilization equipment, such as an appliance, to a receptacle connected to a source of power. Plug blade terminals become de-energized when they are removed from a receptacle and do not pose a shock hazard when used to connect a load to an outlet. However, those plugs are not intended, evaluated, tested or rated as the output conductor for a power generation source. If a PIPV product is exposed to sunlight, it will generate electricity, which can cause the plug blades to be energized at hazardous levels on the accessible plug blades, unless special mitigation measures are successfully implemented.²

3. Ground-Fault Circuit-Interrupters (GFCI) Risk

Standard GFCI outlets are designed for one-way power flow (from the grid to your appliances). When a plug-in solar system backfeeds power in the opposite direction, it can actually damage the GFCI's internal circuitry, causing it to fail. If this happens, the safety device may stay "on" even during a dangerous electrical surge, leaving users at a high risk of lethal electric shock. Because these solar devices can be plugged into any standard outlet, they often end up connected to older GFCIs that aren't built to handle bidirectional power, creating a serious hidden hazard that current safety standards have not yet fully addressed.

Another major safety risk involves "blinding" GFCI outlets, which are designed to shut off power to prevent electrocution. When a plug-in solar system is used, it acts as a second power source on the same circuit; if a dangerous ground fault occurs, the GFCI may successfully cut off the main grid power but fail to stop the solar power immediately. This can leave the circuit energized for up to two additional seconds, potentially delivering a lethal electric shock even after the safety device has supposedly "tripped."³

4. Lack of Professional Oversight

Alaska's housing stock includes a substantial number of older buildings with aging wiring systems. Homeowners and tenants often have no knowledge of circuit capacity, conductor integrity, or shared loads. Because PIPV systems are sold directly to consumers, there is no check to ensure the home's wiring is in good condition or that the system isn't being plugged into

¹ UL Solutions. (2025). *Interactions of Plug-In PV with Protection of Existing Power Systems* [White paper]. https://delivery-p133222-e1298791.adobebeaemcloud.com/adobe/assets/urn:aaid:aem:cd9fa992-2d42-4716-bdeb-d1fd5cea03a3/original/as/Plug-in_PV_Safety_Whitepaper_-_Final.pdf

² Ibid

³ Ibid

an already overloaded or damaged circuit. Allowing plug-in generation equipment to be connected without inspection, notification, or oversight creates significant safety risks.

The Regulatory Blind Spot

Although the bill requires certification by Underwriters Laboratories or a nationally recognized testing laboratory, no electrical protection device is fail-proof. Furthermore, Underwriters Laboratories' testing and certification process for these devices has only just begun as of January 2026.⁴

“While a spokesperson for UL Solutions has stated the company can currently certify a plug-in solar system to the UL 3700 outline of investigation, this is distinct from a formal safety standard. UL Standards & Engagement has not yet developed a final UL standard for plug-in solar, as that requires a consensus-based process with various stakeholders. Consequently, an ultimate UL standard may eventually differ from the current specifications found in the UL 3700 outline.”⁵

According to a recent article in the New York Times, “Until recently, UL had not weighed in on plug-in solar systems. But in December, a for-profit affiliate, UL Solutions, released a set of preliminary certification criteria. A group of independent experts will eventually settle on the final safety standards.”⁶

In its white paper titled “*Interactions of Plug-In PV with Protection of Existing Power Systems*,” Underwriters Laboratories identified and summarized several safety concerns regarding PIPV products:

*“PIPV products can offer innovative methods for harnessing renewable energy to generate clean power for the public. However, they can present significant hazards when connected with traditional wiring systems used in the United States and other locations. Based on the concerns outlined, special risk mitigation requirements are necessary to allow the safe use of PIPV products. In the absence of these special measures, PIPV can present electric shock hazards and fire hazards to consumers, potentially defeating protective technologies required for public protection without any awareness that the previous protection has been compromised. **Allowing PIPV to be plugged into any existing branch circuit with no mitigation for the above concerns is not supported by UL Solutions.** There are potential engineered solutions that can be applied and will be necessary to promote safe use of PIPV products. These can include both inherent product*

⁴ UL Solutions. (2026, January 8). *UL Solutions debuts testing and certification framework for safer plug-in solar across the United States*. <https://www.ul.com/news/ul-solutions-debuts-testing-and-certification-framework-safer-plug-solar-across-united-states>

⁵ Driscoll, W. (2026, January 13). A guidebook on plug-in balcony solar for state-level policymakers. *pv magazine USA*. <https://pv-magazine-usa.com/2026/01/13/a-guidebook-on-plug-in-balcony-solar-for-state-level-policymakers/>

⁶ “States Weigh Bills to Allow You to Make Your Own Electricity,” *New York Times*, February 11, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/11/climate/plug-in-solar-power-bills.html>

features and special installation practices that allow the public to choose electricity sources while also remaining safe.”⁷

If plug-in solar generation devices are to become a viable consumer product in Alaska, they should first complete comprehensive national testing and certification and be incorporated into the National Electrical Code with clear installation and inspection requirements. That approach protects consumers, workers, and first responders while ensuring reliable grid integration.

It is also important to note that this policy approach remains largely untested nationwide. To date, only one state, Utah, has enacted legislation recognizing plug in solar devices in statute, and even there implementation concerns have emerged. Similar bills are pending in other states, where electrical professionals, fire safety experts, contractors, and code officials have raised serious concerns regarding fire risk, shock hazards, breaker masking, anti-islanding reliability, and the lack of clear installation and inspection standards. Alaska should not move forward ahead of fully developed national safety standards.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE HB 257 (Portable Solar Generation Devices).

Sincerely,



Doug Tansy
Business Manager
IBEW Local 1547

DT/jr

⁷ UL Solutions. (2025). *Interactions of Plug-In PV with Protection of Existing Power Systems* [White paper]. https://delivery-p133222-e1298791.adobeaecloud.com/adobe/assets/urn:aaid:aem:cd9fa992-2d42-4716-bdeb-d1fd5cea03a3/original/as/Plug-in_PV_Safety_Whitepaper_-_Final.pdf

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 2:41 PM
To: House Energy; Michael
Cc: Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Jamie Allard
Subject: Oppose HB 257
Attachments: Net Metering Discussion 10-4-2024.pdf

Representatives of the House Energy Committee,

I oppose HB 257.

According to AS 42.05.141 (3). rates are required to be just, fair, and reasonable.

This legislation continues to expand Net Energy Metering and the associated unfair compensation for energy from intermittent renewable resources (portable solar in this case). This legislation is but one more example of piling onto the Net Energy Metering bandwagon.

I have attached a presentation that I delivered to the Homer Electric Association Board of Directors in October, 2024. That presentation demonstrates the many and substantial flaws associated with Net Metering Philosophy and Compensation and includes 10 recommendations to eliminate the massive subsidies therein. The bottom line of that 58-page presentation is:

Net Energy Metering is a flawed construct used to subsidize compensation for intermittent renewables. Net Energy Metering, as implemented, is based on the fallacy that electricity produced from an intermittent renewable resource (portable solar) is identical in both Quality and Quantity as other forms of electricity (like gas and hydro) produced on the Grid and therefore deserves to be compensated as such.

I am prepared to deliver that presentation to this committee or any other committee you wish in order to have a fact-based discussion on the matter (rather than ideological based talking points that typically accompany a Net Metering Discussion).

One of the talking points mentioned in public testimony today was that the size of of these systems would be small and unlikely to result in exporting power to the Grid, yet there isn't any protection device that prevents such export. As a result, there is a desire to invoke Net Energy Metering compensation.

Consequently, ANY legislation that deals with Net Energy Metering must reinforce the following principles as guidance for the Regulatory Commission of Alaska to take action.

Principle #1: any Net Energy Metering construct implemented must incorporate ZERO subsidies from one customer to the customer receiving a Net Energy Metering rate. Any subsidy will be deemed to be unjust, unfair, and unreasonable.

Principle #2: any Net Energy Metering construct implemented must recognize that intermittent renewable energy resources are inherently less reliable than historical dispatchable energy resources like natural gas and hydro. Consequently, intermittent resources MUST be accompanied by a storage system (battery or other) that smooths the output and makes possible the dispatch of any excess energy exported to the Grid in order to be eligible for compensation.

Principle #3: Energy from any Net Energy Metering customer must be settled on an hourly basis (simple with real time smart metering) and billed on a monthly basis. This principle is completely opposite the discussion in today's hearing that energy produced in the summer should be used to offset customer demand in the winter. Any excess energy delivered to the grid (without storage and dispatch capability) is virtually worthless and any compensation for this energy shall be reflective of that fact.

Principle #4: Any Net Energy Metering customer using intermittent renewables must pay a Grid Integration Fee for "leaning on the Grid" whereby they benefit from Grid services differently from a typical (non-intermittent) customer. This is the "user pays principle". Those who use the Grid to integrate their intermittent resources (including "storing" for months at a time to offset winter energy consumption with summer energy production) should pay for the Grid integration service.

Additionally, for "plug in solar" described in the presentation diagrams associated with this bill, it's not clear to me where utility employees would be protected from a solar system back feeding onto the Grid at a time when there is a Grid outage. I would encourage the legislators reach out to the Utilities and seek clarification as to how their employees would be protected while trying to restore electrical service customers on the Grid.

Finally, as discussed in today's hearing, this bill anticipates to use the Net Metering reimbursement fund described in HB 164. It appears this fund mechanism is structured to avoid a subsidy from a non-renewable customer to a renewable customer. Rather, the subsidy is passed onto a legislature funding mechanism (just one more reason to take money from the PFD).

Just because the money doesn't come from a customer directly, doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. Eliminate the subsidies directly, follow the "user pay principle", and there is no need to create a reimbursement fund.

Michael L. Jones

Resident of Homer

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 4:56 PM
To: House Energy
Cc: Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Bill Elam
Subject: HB 257

Honorable Energy Committee Representatives,

I'm writing to express my opposition to HB 257

This bill continues to expand net energy metering and the associated unfair compensation for energy from intermittent renewable resources (portable solar in this case). This bill is another example of jumping on the net energy metering bandwagon.

Net energy metering is a flawed idea to subsidize compensation for intermittent renewables. Net energy metering, as it has been implemented, is based on the incorrect assumption that electricity produced from an intermittent source (portable solar) is identical in quality and quantity to other forms of electricity production (like gas and hydro) and should be compensated as such.

In addition, for “plug in solar” as described in the presentation diagrams associated with this bill, it’s not clear to how utility employees would be protected from a solar system back feeding onto the Grid at a time when there is a Grid outage. I encourage you to request clarification from existing utilities as to how employees would be protected while working on the Grid.

As discussed in the hearing, this bill anticipates using the net metering reimbursement fund described in HB 164 to compensate intermittent energy producers. The cost of such a subsidy is passed on to all Alaskans. Eliminate the subsidies completely, follow the “user pay principle”, and there is no need to create a reimbursement fund.

Respectfully,

Charlie Franz

Homer

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Cc: [Rep. Ky Holland](#); [Rep. Donna Mears](#)
Subject: Public Comment in Support of HB257
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:16:02 PM

Dear House Energy Commission,

My name is Josh Fortin and I live in Anchorage in District 13. I am writing support of HB257 because it will increase options for Alaskans to reduce their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

Other states, such as Utah, are considering similar bills and plug-in solar units are becoming increasingly popular in Europe. The rapid adoption of this technology can be attributed to many factors, but particular importance to myself is the relative low cost and technological complexity of plug-in solar compared to traditional solar panels. As someone approaching buying their first home, plug-in solar would be a great stepping stone to gaining more independence and control over my energy consumption as well as helping to mitigate the rising costs of utility bills. For these reasons, I urge you to pass HB257.

Thank you,
Josh Fortin

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Renewable Energy
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 8:04:20 AM

Sent from my iPad Please move forward with this Bill. With all the chaos in US we need free thinking people to think outside of the box going backwards will slow us down. What you do now will help your children and grandchildren. Remember Renewable energy is the future. Thanks for listening to me Shawn Warner

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Yes on HB 257
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:51:47 PM

Hello House Energy Committee,

It is hard to express how excited I am about the possibility of plug-in solar. I rent an apartment in Anchorage with a great south facing balcony that would be perfect for the same solar panel kits that citizens in Utah can pick up at Costco.

I had been trying to find ways of reducing my monthly electric bill, so last summer I signed up for the Chugach Electric Community Solar project. Unfortunately, their surplus energy buy back from my leased panels is near nothing and it has trapped me in a contract that has nearly doubled my rate. I feel scammed and unable to have agency over my own energy production and use. HB 257 would give me and other Alaskans the freedom to choose how we source our energy without large energy companies rigging the market to their advantage.

Please take into consideration those that live and work in Alaska, but do earn enough to own a home where the benefits of long term investments can be had. HB 257 would allow me to make an investment in my future that I can afford.

Best regards,
Craig

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Solar energy bill
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 9:02:26 PM

Hello. Please support any bill that will encourage home owners to get solar panels.

I would like to install panels on my roof but am resistant because of the cost

We need to rely less on fossil fuels to save the planet for our children

Best Regards,
Deedee Brandeberry
Sent from my iPhone

Best Regards,
Deedee Brandeberry
Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: HB 257 testimony
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 6:28:37 PM

Dear House Energy Committee,

My name is Miaja Coombs, and I am from Wasilla, but I currently live in Fairbanks. I am writing to voice support for HB 257 because I would love to see red tape removed for plug-in solar. Investing in rooftop solar is cost-prohibitive for many Alaskans, but because plug-in solar power has a lower initial investment cost, it could quickly help supplement rising electricity costs across the state.

Thank you,
Miaja Coombs
Wasilla and Fairbanks, AK

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Plug in solar HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 10:17:19 AM

Dear House Energy Committee,

My name is Shelby, and I live in Anchorage. I am interested in plug-in solar because I believe Alaskans should have the freedom to utilize technology to offset their own bills and improve energy security. More of the grid that is powered by solar would also allow Alaska/Anchorage to extend its natural gas reserves. The Cook Inlet reserves are finite.

Plug-in solar units have been utilized elsewhere and are now becoming popular in Utah. Germany, Spain, and other European nations have successfully implemented plug in solar to the benefit of its citizens while maintaining grid security.

Not all rooftops are ideal for plug in solar; either by aspect, or if someone is renting. These should not be barriers to energy affordability and security.

The Alaska spirit is grounded in independence and self reliance. I believe plug in solar aligns with what Alaska stands for and where Alaska needs to be in the future.

Peace Only,

Shelby Perry

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: HB 257
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:36:01 PM

Hello,

I would like to encourage you all to support HB257.

I am a long time Anchorage resident who has already installed solar panels on our home. I believe that it's essential that an urban infrastructure be as easy as possible for homeowners and renters alike to be able to utilize renewable energy . This bill seems like a market- based solution that helps cut red tape for consumers who want easier access to renewable energy at a small scale. It gives Alaska consumers more choices and independence without requiring subsidies, tax credits, etc.

It is a safe and accessible technology. It's a win-win for renters, apartment dwellers and homeowners too.

As David Wallace- Wells wrote in a *New York Times* opinion piece oday ([An Orphan Revolution](#)) "Pakistan expects that parts of the country will get more electricity from decentralized rooftop solar than from it's entire electricity grid during parts of the day". He also points out that; "in 2024, 92.5 percent of all new power capacity installed around the world was renewable." Surely, Alaska can get into the game too.

I don't see any reason that a bill like this not logical, practical and an important step forward in the inevitable transition of our energy economy away from fossil fuels.

Cami Dalton
Anchorage
[REDACTED] Foraker Dr.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 7:05:41 AM

Dear House Energy Committee,

My name is Heather Scaife, and I live in Anchorage. I am interested in plug-in solar for Alaskans. I have friends with it in other states, and it gives them the freedom to offset their bills, which helps them thrive in other areas. My heart is for Alaskans to have the means to thrive. By removing barriers and affirming the right to use this technology, you can help us do this.

Sincerely,

Heather Scaife
Anchorage, AK

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 7:22:09 AM

Good morning,

I am writing to express my support of House bill 257. I live in a south facing home and get lots of great sunlight in Eagle River. My energy bills have been climbing faster than my pay checks. My gas bill was over \$400 last month alone. Being able to instal a solar panel on my roof and supplement my energy needs with sun could help residents like me in Southeast Alaska cope with the rising cost of natural gas and electricity along with the looming possibility of a shortfall.

Vote yes on house bill 257 for an affordable and sustainable energy future.

Thank you,

Kerri Lathrop
[REDACTED] Whirlaway Rd, Eagle River, AK 99577

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Plug in solar/HB 257
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:04:40 PM

Hello,

I very much support HB 257 and hope you will too. Solar is such an easy way to support climate change mitigation, helps with electricity costs that are going up, is an easy way for Alaskans to have access to renewable energy.

Plug-in solar provides a solution for many residents with roofs unsuitable for more traditional solar systems--for instance, I am a single unit condo owner and in order to have roof top solar, which I would like to have, I have two major hurdles: 1) the HOA is responsible for our roofs and mine will need replacing within 5 years, and 2) if I put solar panels up now, I am also responsible for taking them down when it is time to replace my roof. That is costly. Hence, my enthusiasm over plug in solar!

Increasing accessibility for plug-in solar will also benefit our communities--it will help offset carbon emissions which helps our air be cleaner and therefore our health, healthier. Europe has already shown how safe and popular these are--I am excited to have my own and (as a board member for our HOA) I can then encourage others to invest as well.

I urge you to support HB 257!

Thank you,
Alice Hanscam
[REDACTED] Seclusion Cove Dr
Anchorage, AK 99515

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Alice Hanscam
she/her

[Just Ask Alice Blog](#)

Find me on [Facebook](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Plug-In Solar: HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 12:17:56 PM

Dear House Energy Committee,

My name is Dana Seagars, and I live in Anchorage on the Hillside. I support plug-in solar because I believe Alaskans should have the freedom to utilize technology to offset their own bills and to reduce our state's energy dependence on fossil fuels. Plug-in solar units have been utilized elsewhere and have been widespread in Europe. While I was able to afford to install a solar system on my home, I understand that many Alaskans do not have the funds set aside to do a full solar installation. With our long summer days, I have discovered my system has reduced my energy cost by about 40% over the course of a year. All Alaskans with good solar exposure should be able to plug-in solar unit and thus reduce the demand on our limited energy resources here in South Central. By removing barriers and affirming the right to use this technology, you can allow many to conserve fuel for others.

Thank you,
Dana J Seagars
Anchorage, AK 99507
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Support for HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 12:38:35 PM
Attachments: [1753312551663.png.png](#)

Hello,


My name is Lauryn Baldwin, and I am an Anchorage Resident. I am writing to house energy, to show my support for HB 257, which is a great opportunity for Alaskan residents to test solar energy. It is a market based solution that helps cut red tape for consumers who want easier access to renewable energy, which gives Alaskans consumers more choices, and more independence.

Quyanaqpuk,

Lauryn Ulaaq Baldwin

She/her



From: 
To: [House Energy](#)
Subject: Supporting passage of HB 257
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 11:58:04 AM

Dear House Energy Committee:

I am writing in support of allowing homeowners and renters to be able to install our own plug in solar system that would not be connected to the grid. I do live in Anchorage. I actually have that for my external building as it is and it works just fine in the winter as well as the rest of the 4 months of non winter.

I also am supporting Chugach Electric with its solar panel program pilot at this time. I have found that the best way to keep costs down for energy is to seek sources from numerous options and if it helps the environment and also provides healthy competition with current sources, the better. Free enterprise includes innovations and the ability for the citizen to have options that are we can choose to use or not.

I urge that we take advantage of this opportunity. I am not happy that we are not doing this on a larger scale nationally.

Regards,
Chris Berg Anchorage Alaska.