

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Mia Costello

State Capital Room 119

Juneau, Alaska 99801



Re: Public Comment in Support of SB 69- Exempt Renewable Energy Electric Plants

Dear Chair Costello,

Thank you very much for considering SB 69. My name is Jenn Miller and I'm a professional mechanical engineer and the CEO of Renewable IPP. Renewable IPP is an Alaska Grown small business who develops, builds and operates utility scale solar farms in Alaska. My three business partners and I are living examples of the energy transition as we all came from the oil & gas industry. When we founded Renewable IPP we were passionate about two things: (1) expanding renewable energy in Alaska and (2) delivering economic and low-cost renewable energy. To date I'm happy to report that we've delivered two projects under budget and sell power to Matanuska Electric Association at their avoided cost. We are now embarking on a third project, the Houston Solar Farm, which will almost double to solar capacity in the State in one step!

While we are absolutely thrilled to share these headline stories, I always think back on all the work it took to get here. We started by sharing our business idea with friends and family, news that was almost always met with, "Solar, does that work in Alaska?" We figured out a design that delivers solar energy at roughly one-third the install cost of residential solar and built our pilot project with our own hands to learn how we could optimize the design further. For the Willow Expansion we worked with MEA and agreed a Power Purchase Agreement which was reviewed and approved by the RCA. We also received a loan from the AEA Power Project Fund. All this culminated in us hiring 13 direct employees in 2019 to build the 1.2 MW Willow Expansion project which invested \$1.5 M in our energy infrastructure. All along the way we've had to use our scrappy ingenuity and wear many hats to figure out this new business to deliver solar energy at wholesale prices. I share all this to give the committee a sense of who independent power producers are and what our businesses look like. As we transition to more renewable energy, generation facilities will be more distributed and will often be smaller assets with less staff than our large fossil fuel generation sites today.

SB 69 extends existing legislation which exempts renewable energy IPP's from RCA regulation. Extending this exemption is vital to growing economic renewable energy in the state. As you're aware the RCA already reviews and approves the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) which sets the energy price between the utility and IPP. IPPs are also required to meet utility interconnection standards to ensure safe and reliable operations. Requiring direct regulation of IPPs places a significant burden on our small businesses while delivering no additional value to the consumer. RCA regulation would require our small business to carry additional staff to support tariff filings and our energy would incur a regulation fee. Both result in less economic and more complex projects which disincentivize investment. Investors compare

our projects with other opportunities across the US and Alaska's unique regulation requirement puts our projects at a disadvantage.

I've provided a window into the IPP business and why regulation is unnecessarily burdensome and hurts project opportunities. Before I leave, I'd like to share why encouraging renewable energy IPP's is important to growing renewable energy in our great state. In addition to energy diversity, this presents a significant economic development opportunity for the State. Renewable energy federal tax incentives have just been extended and wind and solar are now the cheapest forms of new energy. Coupled together, two factors mean that there is going to be significant private and federal investment in renewable energy infrastructure in the next decade. I want to see those investment dollars spent on Alaska projects, diversifying our economy, and creating jobs in our State.

Passing SB 69 has long lasting implications for our great State, the environment, and our small business. Thank you so much for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jenn Miller, P.E.

CEO, Renewable IPP

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