Dear Chairperson Huser, Member Jacobs and Member Wagner:

As members of the Iowa General Assembly, we write to provide our feedback on recent developments with respect to your docket related to distributed generation of power in Iowa.

We appreciate the Board's deliberative process. Iowa has a strong bi-partisan tradition of supporting renewable energy, and this certainly extends to distributed generation of solar power.

The General Assembly has enacted and expanded solar tax credits. By the end of 2015, the credit had resulted in more than 1,800 projects spanning 92 counties, leveraging a total investment of more than $85 million since 2012.

We have seen first-hand how a growing solar market benefits all Iowans. Businesses, homeowners and public entities alike have taken advantage of solar installations to better control their energy use and meet sustainability goals. We have also seen small businesses grow and hire more people in order to help design, install and operate solar systems. We want this industry to continue to thrive and for Iowans to continue to enjoy the benefits of small-scale solar power.

We support the Board's deliberative approach to evaluating the benefits and challenges associated with distributed generation of electricity. Specifically, we agree with the Board's conclusion that "[g]iven the current status of distributed generation development and net metering in Iowa, additional information is required before any permanent policy or rule changes are made." We think that the solar market in Iowa needs time to grow. As the market grows, we will have more experience and more data to inform future policy decisions.
We also support the Board's promotion of pilot projects "that will expand renewable distributed generation in Iowa." This is an appropriate focus of the Board's efforts and consistent with our bi-partisan consensus. We hope that the pilot projects will further efforts to make community solar more accessible to a broader number of Iowans interested in being part of our renewable energy future.

However, we are concerned with some aspects of the initial proposed pilot projects. We do not think it appropriate to create a separate rate class for solar/renewable customers as part of these projects. Nor do we find it appropriate to experiment with or substantively change net metering policies through pilot rate design. If the pilot projects move in this direction, they will stifle a promising market, prevent Iowa from reaching our potential as a solar leader, and directly contradict the Board's interest in expanding renewable distributed generation in Iowa.

We encourage the Board to stay the course and focus on actions that increase renewable generation while continuing to collect data on distributed solar power before considering any policy changes. With a data-driven approach designed to maximize the potential for renewable energy development in Iowa, our future will remain bright.

Respectfully submitted,

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