



## Written Testimony to the Vermont House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee on S.202

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March 16, 2026

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Esteemed Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephan Scherer, and I am the CEO and Co-Founder of CraftStrom. I am pleased to offer written testimony today at the invitation of Committee Chair James regarding S.202, an act relating to portable solar energy generation devices.

First and foremost, we applaud the Vermont State Senate, the House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee Chair Representative Kathleen James and all bill sponsors for advancing this critical piece of clean energy legislation.

S.202 has the potential to be a landmark bill that will significantly open up the cost savings of solar energy to more Vermonters. At a time when energy costs are skyrocketing and the existing barriers to adopting solar—such as complex permitting and interconnection agreements—are significant, this bill creates a necessary, simpler, and more affordable pathway for citizens to generate their own clean power.

At CraftStrom, we have seen firsthand how plug-in solar can affordably open up clean energy benefits to millions of people, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide technical guidance based on our experience in other states and Germany. There, more than four million households have adopted this technology to save money and reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

To ensure the success and stability of this program upon wide adoption, we offer two technical suggestions for the Committee's consideration:

1. **Limiting Export to the Grid:** We suggest a modification to specifically limit the export of excess energy from the home to the grid to a maximum of 400 watts. This conservative limit, which is already a safety and reliability standard in other jurisdictions, serves as a responsible and proactive measure to reduce potential burdens on the electric distribution grid as the use of plug-in solar devices expands across the state. This helps ensure a stable and reliable grid for all Vermonters and the utilities that serve them.

The 400-watt export limit is inherently tied to the safety of the home, as the National Electrical Code (NEC) intended and based on similar limits in Germany. A system that exports without any safety or monitoring devices will not have the capability to ensure the chosen circuit isn't overloaded.

2. **Aligning System Capacity to Existing Codes:** We respectfully suggest not limiting the total output of a portable solar system to the proposed 1,200 watts, and instead, advocating for adherence to the established National Electrical Code (NEC). The NEC already defines the safe maximum loads for electrical circuits:

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- 1800 Watts for a standard 15-Ampere breaker.
- 2400 Watts for a standard 20-Ampere breaker.

The 1,200-watt limitation found in the current bill is, in fact, a legislative relic based on the technical specifications of Germany's grid and its standards. It is not aligned with modern American electrical safety standards. By adhering to the existing NEC, the legislature can safely allow Vermonters to maximize their self-consumption of clean energy without compromising safety and simplifying the regulatory framework by relying on established national standards.

One final consideration: by defining plug-in solar systems as “portable,” this could exclude households from the benefits of future federal investment tax credits (ITCs).

We are confident that by incorporating these suggested technical refinements, S.202 will stand as an even stronger piece of legislation – one that saves Vermonters money, accelerates the transition to clean energy, protects the state’s energy infrastructure, and can serve as a model for other states to follow.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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