



Hannah Ellis  
Bright Saver 501(c)(3)  
Position: Support

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**VT S.202**  
Written Testimony

Dear Chair Watson, Vice Chair Williams, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hannah Ellis, and I represent Bright Saver, a nationwide nonprofit dedicated to democratizing solar energy by building an accessible, plug-in solar movement across the United States. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of S.202 and offer the following notes and revisions. These revisions are critical to ensure that all Vermonters, especially renters, have access to plug-in solar.

**1. Remove Section 2(g) of the House amendment, requiring tenants to seek approval from their landlord.**

Requiring landlord consent undermines the core value of plug-in solar to help renters cut their electricity bills. The central promise of plug-in solar is that it allows all Vermonters to own their own clean energy generation and reduce their rapidly rising electricity bills, even if they do not own their own homes. Unlike rooftop solar, which requires home ownership, upfront capital, and utility approval, plug-in solar allows anyone with an outlet to start generating their own energy. That is why millions of these devices are in use across Germany and why 35 states have introduced legislation to enable their use here.

We are therefore deeply concerned about Section 2(g) of the House Amendment, which would require tenants to obtain landlord consent before installing a plug-in photovoltaic device.

If this section is not removed, Vermont would be the first state in the nation to enshrine a landlord veto over plug-in solar in statute. A landlord veto does not protect anyone; it simply denies renters the same access to clean, affordable energy that homeowners take for granted. We deeply respect Vermont as a leader nationally in environmental policy, and it is a real risk that other states will follow suit in adopting this anti-renter provision.

We also ask the Committee to consider where this technology is headed. Plug-in solar standards and device certifications are evolving rapidly. We anticipate that within the next few years,



certified devices will meet safety standards that require no electrical work whatsoever. If a landlord veto is written into Vermont law now, it will remain a permanent barrier even as the technology matures to the point where no reasonable safety concern justifies it.

**2. Remove section Section 2(d) “Nothing in this section shall prevent an electric distribution company from recovering costs associated with the overloading of the service provided due to the presence of a plug-in photovoltaic device.”**

We are concerned that Section 2(d) of the House amendment opens the door to significant utility overreach. The rest of Section 2 rightly prohibits utilities from charging customers fees, requiring approvals, or imposing additional equipment requirements related to plug-in devices. Section 2(d) undermines that framework by creating a broad exception with no defined limits, no process, and no oversight.

[Independent engineering analysis](#) has found that plug-in solar will have no net impact on the grid at the substation level even if 40% of households adopt 1,200W systems. If the technology poses negligible grid risk at scale, there is no justification for a provision that exposes individual customers to undefined liability. We urge the Committee to strike Section 2(d) entirely, preserving the strong, clean consumer protections.

In conclusion, S.202 has the potential to be a model for the nation in opening clean, affordable energy to everyday Vermonters, especially renters. Removing the landlord veto in Section 2(g) and striking the utility cost recovery provision in Section 2(d) are not obstacles to passage, but refinements that would make this already strong legislation cleaner and fairer. Plug-in solar legislation has already passed in New Hampshire and Connecticut and is expected to pass in other nearby states as well this year; without the recommended revisions, Vermonters will be left behind, missing this opportunity to give renters relief from rising electricity bills.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hannah Ellis