**HB 2253 and SB 6113 Concerning Fair Access to Community Solar**

The Environmental Stewardship Working Group of Quaker Voice is strongly supporting community solar bills HB 2253 and SB 6113 for both environmental and justice reasons. Solar

energy is the cheapest form of green energy, and we need to build more of it rapidly. We

need more localized green energy, and we need to give everyone a chance to participate in

the green economy. This bill would allow people who don’t own a home or who, for example, live in shady neighborhoods to participate in locally sited, subscription-based solar programs.

As current written, the bill requires at least 50 percent of the community solar generating capacity to benefit low-income subscribers. More than two dozen states already have such policies and have found that community solar is an effective way to provide affordable green power to historically disadvantaged communities.

This bill would raise the maximum size of community solar projects from 1,000 kW to 5,000 kW and allow larger projects with a utility’s approval. It will increase the community solar programs that are available in Washington and will enable low-income customers to receive the benefits of community solar. The bill would have these benefits for customers:

• Customers without rooftop solar (renters, low-income, condos, homes with old roofs) can participate in the clean energy transition.

• Community solar customers can purchase or subscribe to solar panels that are not located on their buildings and realize the energy benefits on their utility electric bill.

• Subscribers would receive credit for the energy they produce, based on the value set by the Utilities and Transportation Commission.

• A requirement that 50% of all community solar subscriptions would reduce the energy burdens of low-income customers and low-income service providers.

• Tribal-owned community solar projects would have some limitations removed.

It will have additional benefits for the state:

• The state will be enabled to use funding opportunities created by the federal Inflation Reduction Act.

• Our electric grid would be strengthened with additional local clean energy and the bill would help keep our grid of the future affordable.

We are following the lead of Olympia Community Solar and CommunitySolarWA.org.