

Legislation Text

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Calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to adopt the Solar for Schools Act (House Bill 1032) and thanking Representative Fiedler for her commitment to reducing the energy costs of public schools, expanding renewable energy production, and creating family-sustaining jobs for Pennsylvanians.

WHEREAS, School District of Philadelphia Superintendent Tony Watlington recently estimated the District's capital program needs at \$5 billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, Deferred building maintenance has already resulted in health and safety issues for students, educators, and school staff including exposure to asbestos, mold and lead, improperly heated and cooled buildings during multiple seasons; and

WHEREAS, In 2023, seven schools in Philadelphia closed due to the discovery of asbestos, and nearly 100 schools dismissed early due to inability to cool temperatures in extreme heat; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the country, primarily from burning fossil fuels, and was recently ranked 45th in renewable energy production among states; and

WHEREAS, Local communities need family-sustaining jobs as cities and towns across the Commonwealth are affected by inflation, cost of living increases, shrinking tax bases, and rising energy costs; and

WHEREAS, Solar for Schools would create a grant program to fund solar installation at public K-12 schools, career and technical schools, and community colleges by covering 50% of project costs and providing technical support, while the 2022 Federal Inflation Reduction Act offers federal tax credits covering 30-50% of the cost of solar installation with full value direct payments; and

WHEREAS, Schools in Pennsylvania using solar panels to generate power are already saving hundreds of thousands and in many cases, several million dollars, in energy costs over the life of solar projects; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Energy Authority, established by the City Council of Philadelphia to create jobs, strengthen communities, lower energy bills, and reduce the City's carbon footprint, has already provided technical and administrative support for local solar projects; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics projects that solar installers will have some of the fastest employment growth of any occupation this decade, and construction of solar arrays will create jobs in the industry; and

WHEREAS, Adopting Solar for Schools would save schools money on fluctuating and rising energy costs, create family sustaining jobs, and increase the production of renewable energy in Pennsylvania; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby call on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to adopt Solar for Schools Act (House Bill 1032) and thank Representative Elizabeth Fiedler for her commitment to creating better schools and healthier communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to Representative Elizabeth Fiedler, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.