



**MID-AMERICA CARPENTERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA**  
**LOCAL UNION NO. 792**

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June 9, 2025

Illinois Power Agency

Attn: 2026 Long-Term Plan Stakeholder Feedback

105 W. Madison St., Suite 1401

Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Topic #2 – Opposition to a Developer Cap on Community-Driven Community Solar (CDCS)

My name is Brad Long, Business Agent for Carpenters Local 792. Our members work on construction projects of all types and are seeing some of our largest growth in the solar construction field, including the 4-MW Rock Cut Solar Community-Driven Community Solar project now finishing construction on Rockford's west side. Because the project qualified under the CDCS category, it required solid local partnerships and the project committed to using union labor. That meant union carpenters – women and men who live and pay taxes in this community – built the project. In total, more than 10 carpenter-weeks of work went to Local 792 journeymen and apprentices, all earning area-standard wages with full health and pension benefits. Those paychecks ripple through neighborhood diners, hardware stores, and Little League sign-ups long after the last module is bolted down.

CDCS is more than a jobs program, of course. The same project delivered over \$135,000 in direct donations to nonprofits such as Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity, and it will provide long-term utility-bill savings to local residents. Still, as a labor representative, I see the worker impact first: every CDCS-style project guarantees fair wages, OSHA training, and apprenticeship hours that turn rookies into career carpenters. That pipeline is how we keep skilled construction talent here instead of losing them to out-of-state projects.

Placing a cap on the number of megawatts a single developer can bring into CDCS would put successful, community-focused partnerships like this on ice. My members don't ask which company files the paperwork at the Illinois Power Agency—they ask whether the next site will keep them employed through the winter and whether new apprentices will get their required hours. Experienced developers who have already proven they can meet CDCS's high community-benefit bar should be encouraged to replicate that success, not sidelined by an arbitrary cap.

If the Agency's goal is to broaden participation, there are better tools: expand CDCS block size, publish best-practice guides, and offer technical assistance for newer entrants. What we should not do is slow down projects that are already checking every community-benefit box—including union labor standards.

On behalf of the carpenters who set steel posts in the January wind and the apprentices logging hours toward a lifelong trade, I urge the Illinois Power Agency to keep CDCS merit-based and reject a developer cap. Let's build more solar, train more workers, and keep more paychecks local.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brad Long

Representative, Carpenters Local 792

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