

I'm writing to strongly encourage Mass Save to adopt Solar Hot Water (SHW) incentives in the next 3 year plan. The benefits of SHW represent a win across the board for the people of Massachusetts. Homeowners benefit from reduced fuel cost, electricity providers benefit from reduced stress on a grid that faces major upgrade needs as electrical demand increases, the state benefits from a technology that helps meet carbon reduction standards better than the other alternatives on the market, the economy benefits from the creation of good jobs in an industry that can't be exported and, of course, everybody benefits from the cumulative reduction in the amount of carbon being released into the environment and contributing to climate change.

While these systems pay for themselves over time the upfront costs to installing SHW can be too heavy a lift for most households. The result is that it has a hard time competing against cheap (and subsidized) fossil fuels. But the costs of fossil fuels are much higher than what we "pay at the pump" and we are at a critical moment now in human history when we need to flatten the curve of carbon pollution before climate change forces much more drastic and costly action in the not-too-distant future. Simply put, it is worth the investment (along with other alternative energy and energy efficiency measures) to adopt incentives that make it financially possible for households in Massachusetts to install SHW systems. It is perhaps the biggest bang for your buck of any of the alternative energy options.

I am a solar hot water installer. I work for Spartan Solar. The more installations we do throughout Western Massachusetts the more evident it is to me the important impact this industry can have in helping communities reduce carbon pollution and become more sustainable. Part of sustainability means maintaining the expertise in communities to service and maintain these systems. The lack of predictability over the decades with incentives has meant that much of the know-how from the eighties that was developed by the first wave of installers was lost when the incentives disappeared and the industry collapsed. When incentives were resurrected there were good practices and bad practices and the expertise had to be redeveloped. We are very good at what we do. We build systems that will last decades. But if we are unable to maintain our livelihoods in what promises to be a challenging future without financial assistance, we will be forced to find other work, and the investment that we have made in developing our craft will be lost.

We are a small company. The lack of predictability from the CEC rebate program the last couple years has meant that instead of expanding and hiring more technicians to do this work we have been forced to remain small. There is just too much uncertainty to risk purchasing more equipment and vehicles, risk hiring and training more technicians, to extend ourselves in ways that could undermine us if things dry up from a business standpoint. The effects ripple outwards in the local economy. Imagine if we could grow and support more local businesses, provide livelihoods for more of the skilled workers in Western Massachusetts, and do it all by helping our communities

reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. A Mass Save SHW Incentive program could help us bridge this uncertain time. An investment in SHW is an investment in Massachusetts for all the right reasons. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Peter Scherer
Spartan Solar Technician