



## Resolution 1-2014: URGING EQUITABLE POLICIES AND ACCESS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

WHEREAS, energy provides a basic yet vital foundation for economic opportunity and social advancement in low and fixed-income and Hispanic/minority communities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that the United States find ways to assure affordable access to a diverse renewable energy portfolio to better promote a clean and healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, a major recent development in the push for a more diverse energy portfolio is the increasing availability of rooftop solar installations, but the costs of installing and maintaining them are extremely high, often leaving them beyond the reach of most low-income and fixed-income consumers and thus inaccessible to many Americans, particularly Hispanics and other minorities; and

WHEREAS, compounding this situation, many states rely on an incentive called net energy metering, which unless correctly structured may reinforce historic economic and racial inequities in the energy space by allowing those who can afford to install solar panels to push their monthly electric bills to zero by selling power back to the utility and shifting the costs for maintaining the electric grid – including power lines, poles, and other infrastructure – onto the backs of those who cannot afford solar installations and rely exclusively on the electric grid for their energy needs; and

WHEREAS, the use of rooftop solar and other DG systems now has become more widespread, and many states are reviewing their net metering policies to ensure all customers are treated fairly; and

WHEREAS, shifting costs from those who can afford DG systems to less affluent customers and others unable to afford or qualify for rooftop solar leases is an unfair financial burden; and

WHEREAS, studies by state public service commissions in California and Arizona have found that rooftop solar rate structures are

regressive in that they increase the likelihood that low-income customers will pay more for electric utility services as higher-income customers pay less; and

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) has urged state and federal lawmakers to adopt fair, equitable, and non-regressive financing models to aid low-income households and communities to become more energy efficient (NBCSL Resolution ETE-14-32 (2014)).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs (BHCC) supports the deployment of clean energy sources, including solar and wind power, while encouraging policymakers to ensure that pricing structures are fair and equitable for all customers; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs (BHCC) encourages state policymakers to recognize the value that the electric grid delivers to all and to examine the following:

- updating net metering policies in their states so that distributed solar customers and other distributed generation customers that use the electric grid pay a fair and equitable fee to maintain the grid and to keep it operating reliably at all times;
- whether such a fee should be charged solely to solar customers and other distributed generation customers and assessed based on their use of the electric grid;
- policies for solar rooftop customers that distribute system costs equitably by creating mechanisms that recover grid costs from DG systems, enhance cost transparency, and determine if non-solar customers do, in fact, benefit sufficiently from the policy change; and
- ensuring electric rates are fair and affordable for all customers and that all customers have safe and reliable electricity;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that BHCC urges state and federal lawmakers to support programs that provide funding or utilize fair and equitable financing models to aid low-income households and communities to become more energy efficient and to use solar panels or other forms of alternative energy; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of

Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.