

Lowell Larson  
4401 Oneida Street  
Duluth, MN 55804

March 19, 2023  
Labor and Industry Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed amendment to H.F. 2164, which would broaden the scope of the Statewide Contractor Recovery Fund to include claims against solar installers.

In early 2017, I paid \$9943.37 to Able Energy for a solar system which was never installed, despite their commitment to complete it within six months of receiving my down payment.

Before making my down payment to Able Energy, I performed due diligence to make certain that they were a reputable installer. I determined that they had been operating for a number of years; I had them provide addresses of some nearby installations that they had completed and I looked at those installations; and I spoke to the person responsible for administering Minnesota Power's solar rebate program. He was unable to recommend specific installers, but stated that Able Energy was one of the installers that they worked with regularly at that time.

I had no way of knowing that Able Energy was in the early stages of going out of business. Despite many phone calls, e-mail's, and a demand letter from my attorney, they did not refund my down payment or make any progress toward installing my solar system.

The former owner of Able Energy, Michael Harvey, has since been found guilty of theft by swindle and ordered to pay restitution (Hennepin County District Court, File Number 27-CR-21-16205) to a number of customers, myself included. Despite this, I still have not recovered any of my down payment and don't expect to. As of last fall, Mr. Harvey claimed to be working as a beekeeper.

The purpose of the Statewide Contractor Recovery fund is to protect consumers from exactly this type of situation. At this point in history, it does not make sense to me that solar installers are not included.

I urge you to support the amendment to broaden the scope of H.F. 2164. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lowell Larson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lowell Larson