

My name is Brian DiPaolo, and I am a member of Northeast Ohio's renewable energy industry. Over the past three years working as a residential solar panel consultant at YellowLite, I have helped over one hundred homeowners across Ohio and our neighboring states go solar. Our company is a residential and commercial solar panel installation company. We cover all aspects of the process including permits, installation and commissioning.

I am submitting testimony today in favor of SB 289, and would like to urge the committee to take this bill to a vote.

It is my firm belief, that one of the biggest obstacles to Ohioans going solar is unruly HOAs. I have had to cancel several solar panel installation projects within homeowner associations because of cumbersome processes, outdated by-laws and unfair rulings.

Many homeowner associations have a lengthy approval process to allow solar panels on homes. This process can take several months. Homeowners oftentimes have trouble in the first place even getting information from their HOAs about if solar panels are allowed, and what guidelines are required. From there, the HOAs tend to take an undue amount of time to get back to homeowners with approval (or any decision at all) which can impact the homeowner getting federal and local incentives. Oftentimes, the homeowner is subject to an architectural review board which meets seldom. Some HOAs will require a homeowner to get signatures from a large percentage of the HOA in order to move forward. This is an undue burden and unrealistic for working people who raise families. All said, the fact that HOAs are so un-transparent about their solar policies and then provide the homeowner with such a lengthy approval process dissuades countless homeowners from even considering solar in HOAs.

Many homeowner associations do not have up to date by-laws that appropriately cover solar panel installations. Many by-laws were written in the times before solar panels became mainstream and affordable for the average homeowner. For this reason, I have come across many HOA by-laws which 1. Do not include any

mention of solar panels or 2. Provide unrealistic and outdated guidelines pertaining to solar panels. Recently, the look of solar panels has changed from blue on white panels to all black panels which are more aesthetically pleasing. Now that solar panels look more modern, professional installations will no longer be an eyesore on homes. HOAs constantly rule against solar panel installations, but allow eyesores like satellite dishes to proliferate their communities. This perception comes from a place of misunderstanding and a lack of education. Last, many homeowner associations provide rulings against solar installations to “preserve architectural integrity.” They will rule against the installation or force it to go on the back of the home which in some cases can be less energy productive for the solar array. The fact of the matter, is that as long as the solar installation is installed by a NABCEP-certified professional, it will add value to the development, not the other way around.

Might I recommend the following for Ohio’s residential solar legislation going forward:

- A standard solar code for all HOAs in Ohio. That way the rules are the same for every HOA.
- HOAs must get back to homeowners in a timely manner. Upon submission for solar panels, the HOA can have up to two weeks for feedback. If the HOA does not get back to the homeowner within this timeframe, the HOA forfeits their right to provide feedback during the design process and the homeowner/installation company can proceed without penalty.
- Professional installation required for solar installations, so that it is safely and compliantly installed by a NABCEP certified installation company.
- HOAs not allowed to prevent a solar installation or restrict it to a certain part of portion of the roof so long as the panels are centered (to the best of their ability), flush and all-black.

The residential solar industry is ready to work with the home owner associations of Ohio. It is now time for them to show us the same acceptance. It is time for us to stop putting

prioritize our energy future over the aesthetic concerns of misguided HOAs.

Thank you.