



Opponent Testimony of House Bill 118
Susan Munroe
Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy
House Public Utilities Committee
March 23, 2021

Dear Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit opposition testimony to House Bill 118.

As Director of Economic Development for Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy, I assist chambers of commerce and economic development leaders in Ohio to navigate the opportunities with renewable energy.

I am also the former Chamber of Commerce President and CEO in Van Wert County where renewable energy is in action generating clean energy and a cash crop contributing millions in new tax revenues for Van Wert County schools, county government, the OSU extension office, the county library and many other community organizations.

Equally impactful is the new income for landowners who in the face of uncertain markets and weather conditions are now able to diversify their income to support their farming operations for generations to come. Harvesting the sun or wind can welcome a young adult child back to work on the family farm, provides farmers with extra income to buy ag equipment and can help keep the land in the family for decades to come.

The economic growth and job creation opportunity for utility-scale solar development in the state is promising as Ohio stands to generate more than \$18 Billion in economic investment from utility solar projects including: up to 54,111 construction jobs and 618 annual operations and maintenance jobs. All of which could disappear due to the uncertainty and an unstable environment created by this legislation driving away developers and the companies that finance these projects.

Further, House Bill 118 is an alarming proposal that would take away landowners' rights by subjecting solar or wind energy development to local referenda that could result in cancellation of a project. It pits neighbor against neighbor, it's an attack on landowner property rights. No other development, much less energy resource development has to endure this kind of legislation at the local level. It presents a "have and have not" scenario where township residents would get to cast a vote if their neighbors would be able to diversify their income with renewable energy.

Perhaps most concerning for any economic development, chamber of commerce or workforce development organization is the dangerous precedent that HB 118 presents. This legislation lays a foundation for any new investment in a community being subject to a local vote. Additionally, no matter what proponents may say, this bill would establish a precedent for local votes for any other kind of



agricultural land usage such as large livestock operations, specific crops, or ag equipment such as loud grain bin dryers, allowing a local township vote on what you smell, hear or see.

Ohio chamber of commerce and economic development leaders should be able to compete with other states for development. But how can they do their jobs when such over-regulated, anti-free market obstacles are imposed by the government? Ohio is once again trying to drive billions of dollars of investment and thousands of jobs including union jobs out of the Buckeye state with House Bill 118.

At a time when many Ohio communities, especially rural counties are looking to rebuild their economy, clean energy investment is often the #1 opportunity to diversify their economy, attract new jobs and increase tax revenues. The state should not create industry focused barriers to drive this investment away.

I request in closing ask that you oppose House Bill 118. Let's be a pro-business state, welcoming new investment and job creation.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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