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5100 Buckeystown Pike, Suite 255 • Frederick, MD 21704 • (301) 378-7014 • Fax (301) 378-7024 • IVPD\_04@ibew.org

### Testimony of Steven R. Crum

Resident of Ohio Senate District 30

International Representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Before the Committee on Energy and Public Utilities

May 19, 2021

I am submitting testimony today in opposition of Senate Bill 52. As written, SB 52, would have a negative impact on job creation in Ohio as a deterrent for energy generation projects within our state. The state of Ohio already has a very robust Ohio Power Citing Board process, with ample opportunity for participation, a process in which experts are decision makers. In addition to the effective state Power Citing Board process, Ohio also has a unique program that makes Ohio desirable for development. Ohio's PILOT program incentivizes job creation for Ohio residents by offering beneficial property tax treatment to developers in exchange for commitments that are beneficial for Ohio residents. The requirement I would like to discuss today is that 80% of individuals employed on a solar project must be Ohio residents.

The majority of solar projects in the pre-application or pending phases are located in rural Ohio. These communities were hardest hit by the recession ten years ago and were among the hardest hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to unemployment, underemployment is prevalent throughout rural Ohio.<sup>1</sup> Solar development in these areas has the potential to not only generate revenue within the community that can be used to support critical services and infrastructure, but from the IBEW's perspective, solar development can create a pathway to a career in the electrical industry. These areas need the jobs that solar development stands to create.

A 2020 study by Ohio University<sup>2</sup> on the economic impacts of utility-scale solar within our state found that nearly 55,000 jobs could be created in Ohio during the construction phase of solar projects alone. The same study found that for every direct job created by these projects, one job would be created state-wide. The IBEW is excited about these opportunities. The IBEW stands ready to partner with developers, contractors, state and community-based organizations, and all interested parties to focus on workforce recruitment and development.

The IBEW represents over 20,000 workers in Ohio. These Ohio residents are trained, highly-skilled and their jobs are family-sustaining, community-supporting, lifelong jobs – they are careers with room for advancement. I stand before you today as someone who has made a living, supported my family, given back to my community, and when the time comes, I will be able to retire comfortably as a result of jobs like the ones SB 52 stands to negatively impact.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epi.org/blog/ohios-economy-no-longer-fully-recovers-after-recessions/>

<sup>2</sup> Michaud, G., Khalaf, C., Zimmer, M., & Jenkins, D. (2020). *Measuring the economic impacts of utility-scale solar in Ohio*. Developed for the Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition of Ohio (USSEC).

As a stakeholder in the industry who will be impacted, we have not been contacted or talked to for any input on modifications to this Bill. This Substitute Bill is not a compromise!! I urge you to support Ohio jobs by opposing this Bill in it's current form.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Crum  
46242 O.R. and W. Tunnel Rd.  
Caldwell, OH 43724