

Testimony Supporting

HB 201 – Prevents local governments from limiting use of natural gas

before the

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

by

Benjamin Holt

Embers Custom Fireplace & Gas Products

May 25, 2021

To: Committee Chairman Rob McColley and Members of the Committee

My name is Benjamin Holt. I am the Owner of Embers Custom Fireplace & Gas Products and a lifelong son of Ohio. My company owns three fireplace retail stores in the state of Ohio: North Olmsted, Solon and Mentor. We have been providing customers with efficient gas heating products since September 4, 2004. Our locations sell a full selection of gas fireplaces, gas log sets, gas inserts, and outdoor gas cooking appliances. Embers Custom Fireplace & Gas Products works in and supports 9 different counties in Northeast Ohio. We employ on average 9 full time employees and partner with 6 independent contractors on heating projects. As a supplier of efficient gas heating fireplaces to the residents of Ohio, I urge you to vote YES on HB 201.

Communities across the Ohio have proposed bans on gas appliances in new buildings and construction. HB 201 will protect my business by providing consistent and stable building codes across all the jurisdictions we work in. Without this bill, we would not be able to offer the majority of our products, severely hindering our ability to stay in business. This would not only affect my employees, but the numerous independent contractors we work with, as well as, hundreds of jobs throughout our supply chain.

Banning natural gas would not only negatively impact my business, employees, and customers; it also threatens to take away the right of Ohioans to choose the type of appliances for their homes and businesses. Two-thirds of the population in Ohio depends on gas as a direct energy source. HB 201 will allow Ohioans to have a choice on the most cost-effective way to heat their homes. Our gas fireplaces are a reliable source of secondary heat and can be crucial for families during a power outage.

I ask that you please vote YES on HB 201 and show your support for our jobs, our customers, and our communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.