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**Written Proponent Testimony on House Bill 201
Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
June 15, 2021
Jason Smith, Associate State Director, AARP Ohio**

Chair McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 201 on behalf of AARP. As a nonpartisan, social mission organization representing individuals aged 50-plus with a national membership of 37 million and approximately 1.5 million members in Ohio, AARP is deeply interested in protecting Ohio consumers from policies that negatively impact their family budgets, particularly those 50-plus who are often most affected. We believe that House Bill 201 protects Ohio consumers and ask for your support.

While AARP supports sustainable energy policies, we must also consider the cost on consumers and ensure that older Ohioans are not pre-empted from using the fuel of their choice. Prohibiting the use of natural gas, as has been proposed in some communities across the country, could prove to be an expensive proposal for state utility customers. Banning the use of natural gas in a community could cause the need for new generation, transmission, and distribution facilities to dramatically increase to meet the new demand for electricity.

Worse, remaining natural gas customers would be forced to pay higher rates due to the newly-stranded natural gas assets being spread across a smaller customer base. Prohibiting the use of natural gas in one community would have rippling effects on all utility customers and AARP has opposed similar efforts in Arizona, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Texas.

We favorably ask for passage of House Bill 201. Thank you for this opportunity to share our testimony supporting House Bill 201, please feel free to contact AARP Ohio if you wish to further discuss our position.

