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Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
Written Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 61
Green Energy Ohio
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Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and Members of the Local Government and Elections Committee, my name is Jane Harf and I am the Executive Director of Green Energy Ohio (GEO). Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments as a proponent of Senate Bill 61. Green Energy Ohio (GEO) is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable energy policies, technologies, and practices. We represent a diverse membership of individuals, businesses, community and government entities, and academic institutions who share GEO's mission.

Senate Bill 61 takes an important step towards allowing Ohioans to make their own choices with regard to energy use. As the installation cost of residential solar systems is going down, the benefits continue to increase. For many homeowners, the decision to install solar panels is based on the savings they will accrue over the life of the system. As residents become more aware of how they use energy, they also choose to learn more about where that energy is being generated. Generating a portion of their own energy through a solar system fulfills both the desire to control household costs and a commitment to an environmental ethic that includes the use of renewable resources.

All homeowners should have the right to purchase a solar system. Unfortunately, many Homeowners Associations (HOAs) make this impossible by imposing unnecessary and unfair restrictions on residents who want to install solar, including limits on the size of the system or on how the array is designed and situated. These arbitrary rules can result in added costs, making the systems uneconomical.

Passage of Senate Bill 61 would create reasonable guidelines for solar installation in these neighborhoods. HOAs would maintain their role in managing the aesthetics of their communities, while reducing the need for protracted and expensive litigation with their homeowners over unreasonable solar restrictions.

The solar energy industry in Ohio is also one of the fastest growing economic sectors, providing employment opportunities and supporting local supply chains. Homes with solar systems have proven to be more attractive to many potential buyers as well, thereby increasing property values in the area and contributing to community growth.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony.