



LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND ELECTIONS  
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date March 30, 2021

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Organization Representing: Self

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 61

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm writing to urge you to support SB 61 and offer proponent testimony.

This bill provides common-sense protections for homeowners who live in HOAs and want to install solar panels. All homeowners should have the right to install solar. Unfortunately, many HOAs make this impossible. They impose unfair restrictions on homeowners that want to go solar. Beyond precluding installation at all, these could include limits on size or how the array is designed. Such restrictions can ruin the economics of a proposed array.

I submitted such a request to the Emerald Estates HOA (Jackson Township, Stark County) in 2018. That was initially denied by the HOA's Architectural Review Board. My selected solar installer (Yellow Lite in Cleveland) and I appealed to the HOA board. During that meeting, it was clear that the board members lacked enough knowledge of the basic design and function of such an array to make an informed decision. Despite submission of a revised proposal that included skirting and other aesthetic changes (driving the project cost upward) requested during that meeting, my application was ultimately declined again as it "was not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood". I considered litigating the issue but the cost of pursuing such actions are prohibitive.

I joined by HOA's board as Treasurer last spring and now have new insights into how it functions. That's only served to reinforce my belief that HOAs have no business regulating solar arrays beyond requiring that the arrays meet code and, perhaps, are professionally installed.

Enacting SB 61 will reduce the need for protracted and expensive litigation between homeowners and HOAs. Solar energy helps Ohioans save money and take control of where their electricity comes from. We should not allow HOAs to put up unfair barriers to solar.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony.

Steve Walker  
Canal Fulton, Ohio