



Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
SB 61 - Proponent Testimony
Sarah Spence, Executive Director
October 19, 2021

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written only proponent testimony for Senate Bill 61. My name is Sarah Spence, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF).

OHCEF was founded in 2015 to provide a forum for conservatives to discuss a diverse, all-of-the above energy portfolio – one that includes not only existing sources of traditional energy generation, but one that also seeks to expand the development of clean and renewable energy sources. OHCEF believes that clean energy and energy made clean through technology can strengthen both our economy and our national security while providing unmatched opportunities for Ohio-led innovation and job creation.

While Senate Bill 61 covers a number of provisions regarding condominiums and planned communities, there are several provisions – namely those found within Section 5311.192 and Section 5312.16 – that brings OHCEF support to this bill. These provisions begin to lift some of the more unreasonable restrictions created by homeowner associations (HOA) that prohibit residents of planned communities from installing solar power on their own property while preserving the rights of an HOA to establish reasonable restrictions on solar collection devices within their communities.

While this bill would bring further clean energy development to Ohio and enhance the ability of Ohioans to produce their own energy on their privately owned property, it would also give Ohioans greater energy freedom. OHCEF believes that each Ohioan should be able to choose from where they procure their energy, and the solar provisions of this bill would do just that.

We appreciate Senator Blessing's diligent and continued work on this piece of legislation that grew from being focused solely on allowing rooftop solar within planned communities, to a more comprehensive planned communities bill that brought stakeholders together to work toward supporting these policy goals. Through his work, the previous version of this legislation, SB 289 from the 133rd General Assembly, had no opposition testimony and passed



unanimously from both the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee and the Senate floor.

Passing Senate Bill 61 would be a positive development for Ohioans who are subject to HOA rules by easing unreasonable solar power restrictions. Not only will these provisions allow for continued solar industry development and job growth in the state of Ohio, but they will also strengthen property rights for the 1.7 million Ohioans currently living in condominiums and planned communities. Ohioans should never have an unreasonable limitation placed on them that would prohibit their ability to produce energy on their own property.

Thank you again for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 61. If you have any questions for me, I would be happy to meet with committee members.