



January 25, 2022

Mryia Williams - Testimony in support of SB 61

Dear Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me to offer my proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 61. I applaud Senator Blessing and Senator Antonio for writing a planned communities bill which will protect homeowner's rights by lifting unreasonable HomeOwner Association (HOA) restrictions while still maintaining an HOA's role in safeguarding the aesthetics of their communities. In the previous iteration, SB 289 from the 133rd General Assembly, the proposed legislation passed unanimously from committee and the Senate floor.

I ask that you vote for this bill today and send SB61 to the full Senate with the recommendation to adopt. Since SB61's introduction in February 2021, there have been several committee hearings which allowed for thorough examination of this bill. The time to move forward is now and I advocate for a vote today.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mryia Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

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Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee  
Proponent Testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 61  
Mryia Williams, Program Associate  
Solar United Neighbors of Ohio

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and Members of the Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for allowing me to offer my proponent testimony today for Senate Bill 61. My name is Mryia Williams and I am the Program Associate for Solar United Neighbors of Ohio, a non-profit organization representing solar homeowners and supporters of rooftop solar. Solar United Neighbors brings people together to support energy rights and to go solar through co-ops. We believe that all property owners, regardless of whether they live in a planned community or not, should be able to install solar collection devices and benefit from making their own energy choices.

According to a report by iPropertyManagement from October 2021, there are more than 8,400 HomeOwners Associations (HOAs) in Ohio which means roughly 21% of Ohio's homeowners have a property within a planned community. In addition, Pew Research has completed a survey which found that over 40% of homeowners have given serious thought to adding solar panels to their homes.

In an ideal situation, all homeowners should have the same right to invest in a home solar system. Unfortunately some HOAs block solar installations entirely while others impose unfair regulations on size, design, or placement which in turn make the systems unviable. Beyond denying homeowners the ability to create their own energy to save on their electric bills or to provide the security of having a backup power source during an outage, we also see a loss of support to the Ohio solar energy industry when they lose business with each system which can not be installed.

Clean energy technology is one of the fastest growing economic sectors with Ohio having the opportunity to be a leader in innovation and job creation in this category. Each home that goes solar makes use of a supply chain for items that can be made in Ohio like photovoltaic panels, semiconductor materials, and backup batteries. Let us also not forget that a home solar array supports installation companies who provide solid employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labor.

Senate Bill 61 would create a number of reasonable provisions for planned communities, namely those in Section 5311.192 and Section 5312.16 would be a balanced approach to allowing Ohioans the ability to produce their own energy on their

privately owned property while still allowing HOAs to maintain guidelines to protect the aesthetics of the community. With your vote for SB61, the regulations would allow for continued solar industry development, job growth in Ohio, and bolster the property rights for the more than 1.5 million Ohio residents living within a planned community.

I ask that you vote for the bill today and send it to the full Senate so that we can move forward in supporting more Ohioans having energy freedom.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mryia Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mryia" being more prominent than the last name "Williams".

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