

# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 575



## Proponent Testimony by Daniel L. Shirey on House Bill 197 Business Manager, IBEW Local Union 575 House Public Utilities Committee September 20, 2023

Chairman Stein, Vice-Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 197 (HB 197), a bill to create a community solar pilot program. My name is Daniel L. Shirey, and I am the Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 575, Portsmouth, OH.

Good morning esteemed representatives of the Ohio House. Again, my name is Dan Shirey, business manager for IBEW 575 located in Portsmouth Ohio, with jurisdiction in 10 counties of South-Central Ohio. The majority of those 10 counties fall with Appalachia, I mention that because I think it has utmost relevance to today's hearing. As a Business Manager of a building and construction trades union, I am tasked with negotiating contracts, enforcement of those contracts, policing and organizing our jurisdiction, administering multiple benefit trust funds, and most importantly seeing to the welfare of those members that I represent.

IBEW 575 has constructed or is in the process of constructing 5 utility scale solar projects, not to mention the countless potential future projects. Because of these projects, our membership has risen from 330 members to over 500 members in the last 2 years alone. Obviously, solar power generation has positive environmental impacts, but I would like to focus on the positive human impact. As you all know, the Appalachian counties of Ohio have been inversely affected by the opioid epidemic. In my opinion, this is primarily because of the lack of economic opportunity in those areas. If one has no hope for the future, one escape is drug and or alcohol abuse. Because of the added demand for electrical workers in our region for those solar projects, IBEW 575 and our apprenticeship, the Electrical Training Academy, has been able to partner with several Community Action organizations, multiple Ohio Workforce Development boards, and local drug rehabilitation facilities to change lives in a positive way, bringing families out of poverty and giving hope for a dignified future to those affected by drug abuse. These Solar projects provide a middle-class sustaining income, health insurance, and the opportunity for a dignified retirement for folks that otherwise would likely be on public assistance. House Bill 197 would build on the current utility scale PILOT program, that has created a solar renaissance in Ohio, providing much needed life sustaining jobs in our area.

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Although community solar is on a smaller scale, the benefits to those communities are just as needed. I stand before you today to sincerely ask you to recommend passage of House Bill 197 to the full body of the Ohio House of Representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of HB 197. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.