

Proponent Testimony for HB 197
Melink Solar Development
September 20, 2023
Written-Only Testimony

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 197. My name is Donna Jones, and I am a Manager and Partner with JCD Solar Consulting, LLC which does business under the tradename Melink Solar Development (MSD).

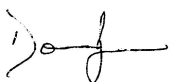
MSD was formed in 2017 as a spin-off of the solar development arm from within Melink Corporation, which is headquartered in Milford, Ohio. MSD provides pre-construction development services for utility-scale solar PV projects, including concept design, interconnection review, site due diligence, permitting, and structured finance. MSD is operated by its three founding Partners, who collectively have more than 30 years of experience in the solar industry. The MSD Partners have successfully completed solar PV projects across the state, including the solar facilities developed for Urbana University, Cedarville University, the University of Dayton, and the Cincinnati Zoo.

HB 197 would create a community solar pilot program in the state of Ohio. This legislation would enable our company, MSD, to expand our business in Ohio while also generating valuable benefits for the communities served. The legislation would allow for Ohioans to subscribe to a share of a solar farm and receive bill credits that reduce their monthly electric costs. Community solar projects produce benefits in two key areas—first, in savings for the customers participating, and second, in economic development and investment in the communities where the projects are located.

MSD supports solar PV as part of the larger integrated clean energy solutions that will power our homes and communities in the future. In addition to generating clean energy that avoids the production of harmful pollutants associated with fossil fuel generation, solar PV projects can be customized to fit the needs of the communities in which they're located. Such customization can include co-locating smaller distributed solar farms within compatible agricultural activities, on vacant land, or on former brownfields, to site clean generation sources within to the communities served and avoid costly transmission losses. Additionally, since solar PV contains no moving parts and requires no fuel inputs for production, the cost to operate and maintain such facilities is less than traditional fossil fuel generators, which provides a meaningful hedge to ratepayers against inflation. Last but not least, from an economic benefit perspective, such projects support job creation and create on-going tax contributions.

Personally, as someone who was born and raised in Ohio, graduated from Wright State University, and has family located throughout the state, I care deeply about the future of Ohio. On that basis, I urge you to support HB 197.

Thank you,



Donna Jones
Partner
JCD Solar Consulting, LLC
d/b/a Melink Solar Development