



**Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Bill 197 (Hoops/Ray)
Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
September 20, 2023**

Dear Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and Members of the Public Utilities Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share Sierra Club Ohio's proponent testimony regarding House Bill 197, which would establish community solar pilot and solar development programs. We have consistently supported legislation that would authorize community solar in Ohio, including HB 450 from the 134th General Assembly, in part because it would give Ohioans greater choice and financial freedom, because it would benefit public health and our shared environment, and because of its potential to resolve issues of energy equity.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

Shared renewables, also known as community renewables, are an emerging procurement model allowing multiple customers to buy, lease, or subscribe to a portion of a shared green power system that is usually located away from their home or business. The model is especially appealing to customers whose on-site resource potential is limited; customers who rent; or customers who are otherwise unable or unwilling to install a renewable energy generator on their residences or commercial buildings.

Community solar . . . is currently the most popular form of shared renewables. . . . According to a 2015 study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), over 50 percent of Americans who would like to use solar energy are unable to install a rooftop solar array. Shared renewable systems can enable those customers to purchase green power through an innovative supply option.

<https://www.epa.gov/green-power-markets/shared-renewables>. More than 20 other states have enacted community solar legislation, including Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

We encourage you to take the relatively limited step of passing HB 197 and authorizing a community solar pilot program in Ohio. The dimensions of the anticipated pilot program should be adequate to establish proof of concept for community solar throughout the state, while also avoiding any significant knock-on effects, such as cost shifting between customer classes.

We look forward to the benefits that shared renewables can give to Ohio, including customer choice, lower energy costs and a cleaner grid. Please contact us with any questions or for additional information, and please do all that you can to move HB 197 as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for supporting the people of Ohio.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ericka Copeland
State Director
Sierra Club Ohio