



Proponent Testimony by Kyle Blocher on House Bill 197
Manager, SolarStone Partners
House Public Utilities Committee
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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) to drive investment in community solar development across Ohio. My name is Kyle Blocher, Manager of Markets and Policy for SolarStone Partners.

SolarStone is a Minnesota-based solar development firm committed to bringing value and best-in-class service to the people we know best: hard-working landowners, farmers & industry leaders. SolarStone was formed by in 2012 on the heels of Minnesota's passage of its pioneering community solar garden legislation, which inspired its two co-founders to impact the community where they both lived by increasing the land value of their fellow Minnesotans, create energy savings for subscribers to the community solar projects being developed and helping clean up local air pollution. For the landowners and farmers that we work most closely with, leasing land for community solar has provided a diversified source of stable and predictable long-term cash flow, helping foster a stable financial future.

After successfully developing over 100 megawatts of community solar in Minnesota, SolarStone has expanded to develop over 5 gigawatts of community and utility-scale solar projects across 14 states. As SolarStone has evolved and matured alongside the broader community solar market, we have increased our commitment to driving investment in underserved communities and developing underutilized land. We are actively developing brownfields, industrial sites and other distressed land in community solar markets across the Midwest and look forward to doing the same in Ohio.

SolarStone fully supports HB 197, the passage of which would enable us to invest and develop new infrastructure in Appalachian Ohio and throughout the state. What's more, SolarStone's experience serves as a case study which demonstrates how community solar legislation can catalyze local entrepreneurship. With the enactment of HB 197, Ohio entrepreneurs will have the same opportunity to launch and grow small businesses that was extended to SolarStone's founders a decade ago.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of HB 197.