

Proponent Testimony by Howard Bergh on House Bill 197
Ohio Voter and Taxpayer
House Public Utilities Committee
April 24, 2024

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 **Ohio Community Solar (OCS) Pilot Program** that will advance Ohio's energy security goals and economic growth. My name is Howard Bergh, and I am a voter and taxpayer in Ohio for 31 years.

I am retired from Catholic Charities Southwest Ohio and am active in environmental advocacy groups that include Faith Communities Go Green and the Care for Creation Task Force. However today I speak for myself (not these groups) to encourage passage of HB 197 – Community Solar. My motivation is to preserve a livable world for my grandchildren. Extreme weather and ecosystem destruction will continue to get worse unless we do something to reduce the amount of carbon pollution accumulating in the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels. Carbon pollution continues to accumulate and stays in the atmosphere and remains there heating the planet, so action needed now. Acting later will be too late.

If enacted Ohio community Solar HB 197 will:

- 1.) Enable solar power for renters, condos, townhomes, and small to medium size businesses for whom rooftop solar is not feasible.
- 2.) Authorize up to 1,500 mega-watts (MW), enough electric to power up to 300,000 homes
- 3.) Save OCS subscribers money with a 5-20% bill credit from their utility provider for energy produced by Community Solar facilities
- 4.) Not need subsidies from other rate payers
- 5.) Enable both business and non-profits (including congregations) to develop OCS

Ohio has fallen behind in renewable energy generation with just under 1,000 MW total. Community Solar is now available in about one third of US states and is very popular. Please support this bill to expand OH sustainable power.

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