

LIVING TRUTH CENTER FOR BETTER LIVING

Proponent Testimony by Juanita Stevens on House Bill 197
Board President, Living Truth Center for Better Living
House Public Utilities Committee
April 23, 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 (HB 197), a bill to), a bill to enable a community solar pilot program in Ohio, My name is Juanita Stevens.

I am Juanita Stevens, the Board President of Living Truth Center for Better Living. Our center is located in East Cleveland, Ohio 44118, and we are committed to serving the community in various outreach programs. We believe that change is necessary in an underserved community where the voices of the residents are not being heard. Our aim is to work closely with the community and business sectors to address the issue of racial justice based on redlining within the underserved community, which is considered one of the poorest cities in America.

We are excited about the opportunity to become a part of the solar pilot program in Ohio. There are plenty of empty lots available for solar panel farms in the East Cleveland Community, along with homeowners who are willing to join in with community solar projects.

The East Cleveland Community is an energy-burden area, and the Solar Pilot program would be a perfect fit for us. As per the NOACA report, 11 census tracts exist in East Cleveland, of which nine are designated as at 90% or greater energy burden. Census tracts 1511 and 1514 were combined to form census tract 1993 for the 2020 census. While 1511 was energy-burdened, 1514 was not. Furthermore, the 9/11 2010 census tracts were energy-burdened, indicating that 81% of East Cleveland is energy-burdened. This clearly demonstrates that the East Cleveland Community would make a great fit for the Solar Pilot Program. I am thrilled to provide proponent testimony on behalf of HB 197 and urge you to consider our request to become a part of the solar pilot program in Ohio.

Thank you for your time, and I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Juanita Stevens, Board President

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