

April 20, 2024

Chairman Stein,
Vice Chair Blasdel,
Ranking Member Weinstein
Members at the Public Utilities Committee

Greetings Committee Members,

My name is Paul Scheiwiller, I am an individual land owner in the state of Ohio, investing heavily in Ohio farm ground starting 2 decades ago. Shortly after completing my anesthesia residency, I moved to Lima, Ohio and have been a practicing Anesthesiologist for the past 30 years.

I have been contacted by several solar companies that were willing to make significant investments in Ohio. After consulting with my farmers, I worked with these solar companies to lease small 50 acre portions for community solar. After careful consultation, my farmers assured me that they would still be able to utilize the remaining land around the panels for their farming operations. I have an optioned parcel that is on an 18 hole golf course, I worked with Nexamp to lease a portion of the course, which the remainder would then be modified to a nine hole course. Not all of my land is "prime" these projects are optioned on mostly my least productive farmland.

The placement of solar panels would be a tremendous advantage for my family as it would allow me to pass these agreements to my children. The placement of the panels increases the value of my land, making it unlikely to be sold in the future by my heirs. My wife and I were convinced that partnering with these projects was a tremendous opportunity to our community as well.

Advantages are multifold:

To the environment: This pilot community solar project would allow for a small decrease in fossil fuel consumption as well as carbon footprint, significant portions of the population are very concerned with this issue. It's a start!

To the land itself: Allowing the land to be rested, with native plant reintroduction, decreasing erosion, leading to decreased run off to the water supply, to just name a few.

To my community: Community Solar will allow opportunities to decrease energy cost, which will make a tremendous difference especially for those who struggle to meet these burdens. These projects will also generate additional revenue for the community via increased taxes.

I continue to struggle with the fact that Ohio hasn't yet adopted a community solar program. According to the US EPA, community solar legislation has been enacted in 24 states. Ohio must act now to reap the benefits of community solar.

I urge the committee to pass HB197, allowing landowners to exercise their options to utilize their property for this pilot community solar program.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Scheiwiller