



Proponent Testimony of Tracy Sabetta on House Bill 197
Ohio Field Organizer, Moms Clean Air Force
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 (HB 197), a bill to create a community solar pilot project in Ohio. My name is Tracy Sabetta, and I am the Ohio Field Organizer with Moms Clean Air Force.

We are a community of more than 1.5 million moms, dads, and caregivers from across the country who have come together to advocate for clean air and climate change action to protect our children's health. Since we began working in Ohio in 2011, we have grown to more than 90,000 members throughout the state. Many of those members are the parents of children with asthma and other respiratory illnesses who are negatively impacted by bad air quality days in Ohio.

At Moms Clean Air Force, we believe that we have a moral responsibility to act now to protect the well-being of our children and future generations. To protect the health of our communities and reduce the greenhouse gas pollution causing dangerous and costly climate change, we must begin moving toward more renewable energy generation sources in Ohio.

The 2024 American Lung Association State of the Air Report will be issued today. The report will assign a grade to Ohio counties for particle and ozone pollution, as well as include the number of children and adults with asthma per county. The 2023 report found that eight of Ohio's 10 most populated counties received grades of either D or F for ozone pollution, and there are currently 152,000 children in Ohio who fight asthma every day. We need to do everything within our power to improve air quality and protect the health of our families.

House Bill 197 will help us to reduce those harmful emissions by increasing the amount of energy generated in the state through solar production. As we face the need to bolster our energy supply, we should be identifying ways to keep that energy production local and clean. The community solar program proposed in House Bill 197 is also a pilot program, giving this model a chance to prove itself, as it has done in 22 other states. There is no question that demand for community solar generation will outweigh the 1,500 megawatts allowed by this pilot.

Currently, there are many Ohioans who cannot access solar because they rent their homes, or they cannot yet afford the up-front costs of solar installation on their own. This community solar legislation will provide an opportunity for residents to come together with their community members, purchase locally generated power, and reap the benefits of solar energy more affordably.

House Bill 197 makes community solar an obvious choice. Not only does community solar reduce costs, but increasing renewable energy generation will reduce harmful air pollution that exacerbates the severity and frequency of asthma attacks for our kids—resulting in missed days of school and missed days of work for their parents. Ohioans have a lot to gain from the passage of House Bill 197.

At Moms Clean Air Force, we spend a lot of time thinking about ways to make the future safer, healthier, and more prosperous for our kids. We want our kids to be successful and happy, and we would like them to be able to do that right here in Ohio. Changing the way we generate our electricity, the way we think about our environment, and the way we empower our local communities will go a long way to keeping our kids in the Buckeye State. Let's start by passing this community solar pilot program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of HB 197.