

April 24, 2024

Dear Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein and Members of the House Public Utilities Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Janette McDonald. I am a professor of psychology at Capital University and a proud representative of the Appalachian farming heritage, I ask you to support HB 197, which is an investment in the well-being of Ohio and small family farmers like myself.

If you pass this bill, I will enthusiastically host a community solar farm on a portion of my property. Allow me to share some background about myself to explain why.

I come from a long line of farmers, with my family having inhabited our land in Washington County for over four generations. The rolling hills of our farm have been our sanctuary for well over a century, instilling in us a profound respect for the land and its stewardship.

My family raised prized winning feeder calves and market steers, including Herefords, crossbred Simmentals, Limousines, and Angus. To say I value and appreciate the land is an understatement. My dad taught me that we are not merely landowners but privileged caretakers, entrusted with preserving its integrity for future generations.

But my dad also believed you must change with the times. And this legislation will allow me to pass on this sacred land to the next generation of McDonald's.

I often receive requests to sell my valuable land, but by hosting a community solar farm on a portion of my land, I can ensure its continued vitality while providing much-needed relief to our rural economy.

Bringing community solar to Ohio will give small family farmers like myself the choice for an additional income stream for hosting solar on a portion of my land, while continuing to farm the rest. It will also bring jobs, economic development and tax revenue to my small rural community.

I watched the last hearing, stunned that the same utilities who keep increasing rates said community solar will make our electricity more expensive. I have a friend who lives about 12 miles from me. Last winter one electric bill for his 7-room modular home was almost \$500. Bringing community solar to Southeastern Ohio would give people like my friend and others in rural communities a choice to reduce their electric bills from skyrocketing.

Today, in 2024, my land is still a working farm where hay, oats, corn and barely are still planted, cultivated, and harvested. If you pass HB 197 my land will also harvest the sun.

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Janette (Jette) McDonald