



May 22, 2024

To: Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
From: Americans for Tax Reform
Re: Opponent Testimony for H.B. 197

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, Members of the Committee,

My name is Doug Kellogg, I am state projects director for Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), and director of Ohioans for Tax Reform (OTR). **On behalf of our organizations and our supporters across Ohio, I submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 197.**

This legislation would set up community solar energy projects, but to do so, would manipulate energy production and subsidize favored solar projects. Ultimately it would force some Ohio families to pay for solar power that they do not benefit from.

Any “savings” for those who sign up for community solar is completely artificial, mandated by the government rather than created by the market. The households that sign up for those solar projects favored by HB 197 would get a discount on their energy bill on the backs of Ohioans who did not sign up.

Even worse, the state would be forcing these Ohioans to fund projects, not to their benefit, but to the benefit of developers and labor unions supporting the bill. Meanwhile, radical left-wing climate groups cheerlead this misguided legislative effort.

The new solar facilities created would likely produce energy beyond the needs of customers. Utilities would have to buy all the solar generation produced potentially at the expense of other forms of energy.

There are private companies that would develop the facilities, but instead of reacting to markets and consumer needs, HB 197 puts the government in the role of transferring their risk to others - backstopped by Ohioans working hard to pay their energy bills.

This government intervention in the market is unwarranted and will result in higher costs for Ohioans. Higher costs that would come at a time of high overall inflation and high energy inflation. Families and businesses are paying around 30% more for energy compared to January 2020. It is no wonder voters continue to rank inflation and the economy as their top concerns, alongside immigration, in 2024.

As we have seen in other states who have tried similar policies, like Maine and Minnesota, costs go up for people who don't sign up for the program, which impacts those who can least afford it – like elderly folks on fixed incomes and low-income residents - the most.

Struggling Ohioans would likely be surprised and dismayed if their Republican elected representatives pushed through a bill to drive up their energy costs at the behest of left-wing climate activists.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-785-0266, or dkellogg@atr.org.

Thank you.

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