



Proponent Testimony by Logan O'Neill on Senate Bill 275  
Midwest Regional Director, Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy  
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
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Chairman Reineke, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony for Senate Bill 275 (SB 275). My name is Logan O'Neill, and I'm the Midwest Regional Director for Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy, or CICE. CICE is a nationwide network of over 1,300 chambers of commerce and economic development organizations across the United States (EDOs), including many in Ohio, to advance the economic benefits of the clean energy sector. Prior to joining CICE, I served in local economic development and chamber of commerce organizations as the executive director of two separate non-profits entities working to strengthen the economic vitality of businesses and communities in West Central Ohio for over 10 years.

SB275 represents an opportunity to solve two problems we face today in Ohio. First, there are at least 4,000 distressed properties - brownfields, abandoned mining and landfill sites, and the like - across the state. As a former economic developer and chamber executive, I understand how difficult it can be to redevelop these distressed properties into something economically productive. Due to a multitude of reasons and concerns these sites often sit dormant, many of which are a blight on the local community, and produce no economic activity at all for years or even decades. Using these properties to provide smaller scale clean energy projects that power on Ohio business is a win-win-win. It returns blighted property to a useful purpose, provides locally-produced energy for a business, and provides newfound tax revenue for local and state governments.

Second, Ohio and many other states around the Midwest face an energy crunch, for the first time in two decades, as demand is increasing sharply while new energy generation capacity grows much more slowly. Solar virtual net metering systems like those allowed by SB275 give businesses in Ohio the option of meeting their own energy demands by breathing new economic life into a distressed site within their own utility's service area. These systems reduce the load growth on the overall system, making it easier for our state to meet the growth in energy demand that is already here. In most cases, these virtual net metering systems can be installed in a year or less; much more quickly than a



utility-scale gas or nuclear plant. When paired with battery technology, these solar systems can meet the businesses energy needs even while the sun isn't shining.

As a former economic developer, one phrase that gets brought up often in economic development training programs is having the tools in your toolbox to do the job when you need to be able to help get projects to pencil and get them across the finish line. I have experienced firsthand the benefits of economic development projects succeeding from having resources such as solar be in the toolkit for a community. I have also experienced trying to site solar on a brownfield site. These opportunities, while not always the right solution for every community, may be a solution for a community and/or business in Ohio looking to expand their future right here. Bills such as SB 275 could give companies options around their energy choice mix. I would like to say in closing that continuing Ohio's economic growth depends on our ability to meet the energy demands associated with that growth in an affordable manner. Creative and affordable clean energy solutions like the one proposed by SB275 will help us in our goal of maximizing Ohio's growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of SB275. I'm happy to answer any questions.