

Dear Chairman Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Janette McDonald. I am a full professor of psychology at Capital University, an ordained hospice chaplain with 35 years of grief and bereavement work, and today most importantly I testify as a proud representative of the Appalachian farming heritage. I ask you to support SB 247, which is an investment in the well-being of Ohio and small family farmers like me.

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 my 142-acre farm have been our sanctuary for well over a century, instilling in my family a profound respect for the land and its stewardship.

My family raised prized winning feeder calves and market steers, including registered horned Herefords, crossbred Simmentals, Limousines, and Chianina Angus. To say I value and appreciate our 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.

As you might imagine I often receive requests to sell my valuable land, but by hosting a community solar farm on a portion of that 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 me the choice for an additional income stream for hosting solar on a portion of my land, while farming the rest. It will also bring jobs, economic development and tax revenue to my small rural community.

I've watched past community solar hearings, stunned that the very utilities who keep increasing our rates claim community solar will make our electricity more expensive. From my thorough research and study about community solar, that simply is not true. 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. Another family of friends who live 7 miles from me regularly pays 600 and 700 dollars a month for their electricity. Community solar farms in Southeastern Ohio would give people like my friends and others in rural communities a choice to reduce their electric bills.

Today, in 2024, my land is still a working farm where hay, oats, wheat, corn and soy beans are still planted, cultivated, and harvested. If you pass SB 247 my land will also harvest the sun's energy.

Thank you.

Janette McDonald