

## Testimony by Steve McPhee on Senate Bill 247

*Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee*

*December 3, 2023*

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 on Senate Bill 247 (SB 247), a bill to establish a framework for the Community Solar Pilot Program (CSPP) and encourage community solar facility development in Ohio. My name is Steve McPhee.

I have installed solar panels at my home in 2017 by using my own money, federal tax credits, and a discount through a Cuyahoga County organized program. I am privileged to be able to put up 11 years of anticipated electric bills to do this. Very few people in Ohio have been able to do this, and it is putting us far from leading states in modernizing our energy infrastructure. It is a shame that so many people are excluded from benefiting from reduced energy costs due to Ohio's lack of an affordable entry point for solar or other renewable energy installations.

SB 247 would address this on a pilot basis in several ways:

1. Subscribers receive bill credits for their share of the electricity generated, helping lower their utility costs. Savings are guaranteed by balancing subscription costs with bill credit values.
2. Allows subscribers to move within the same utility service territory without losing their solar subscription benefits.
3. Addresses environmental justice by incentivizing solar projects on underutilized or contaminated properties. Eligible CSFs may qualify for grants under the Brownfield Remediation Program.
4. Assures equity for subscribers by establishing rules to prevent undue fees, ensure transparency in subscriptions, and protect consumers from early termination charges.
5. Avoids discrimination by prohibiting electric distribution utilities (EDUs) from imposing discriminatory fees on CSFs and mandates efficient and safe interconnection of CSFs to the grid.

In addition to these direct benefits to subscribers there are also benefits for all of Ohio including:

1. **Supporting Renewable Energy:**
  - o Senate Bill 247 aligns with Ohio's competitive retail electric service policy by promoting renewable energy through community-driven solutions.
2. **Economic Benefits:**
  - o The bill fosters local job creation in solar energy installation and maintenance.
  - o Distressed site development turns idle or contaminated lands into productive assets, generating local tax revenue.
3. **Grid Resiliency:**
  - o Localized solar generation supports Ohio's energy grid by reducing transmission losses and enhancing resiliency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 247. This bill represents a significant step forward in making renewable energy affordable, equitable, and accessible to all Ohioans while boosting economic and environmental outcomes. I am happy to answer any questions.

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