

Testimony by TRAVIS IRVINE on Senate Bill 247

Communications Director and Former Candidate for Governor, Libertarian Party of Ohio

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 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 Travis Irvine and I am the current Communications Director with the Libertarian Party of Ohio as well as a former candidate for Governor, meaning I'm proud to join this *multi*-partisan effort to make community solar a reality here in The Buckeye State. I want to thank all of the Republican and Democrat legislators who have brought SB 247 to this point, as well as the determined citizens with the grassroots movement who have helped carry this effort from its humble beginnings to this historic moment.

As a Libertarian, I'm encouraged by the bipartisan support this bill has, in addition to the free market, small government and pro-consumer elements it contains at its core. At a time when our state's electricity demands are growing — with PJM saying more energy will need to be readily available to meet this demand in the years ahead — SB 247 gives citizens a way to both *increase* their access to cheaper local energy sources, while *decreasing* their need for costly energy from the grid. This means SB 247 will simultaneously *increase* everyday Ohioans' access to more electricity options, while *decreasing* their energy bills at a time when it seems like prices for everything are constantly going up.

This *also* means that my Republican friends can enjoy how SB 247 *increases* options for consumers in the free market, while my Democrat friends can enjoy how SB 247 protects the environment and *decreases* consumers' reliance on dirty fossil fuels. And as a Libertarian, I appreciate how SB 247 makes decentralization a larger aspect of Ohio's competitive energy market, a true win-win-win for all Ohioans. In fact, from what I understand, the *ONLY* opposition to SB 247 comes from the same old big energy companies who are anti-competition and have a history of seeking big government bailouts — paid for by ratepayers and taxpayers alike — whenever *they* can't seem to understand the trajectory of the free market and make poor business decisions. No matter how many campaign donations — or bribes — they give to some members of this esteemed body, they can't stop the free market principles that are enshrined in SB 247 from eventually happening. And *now* is the time to make them happen.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 247. This bill represents a significant step forward in making renewable energy in The Buckeye State affordable, equitable and accessible to all Ohioans in rural and urban areas alike — from Athens County down in Appalachia to Lake County up on Lake Erie — all while improving our economy *and* environment. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions and I encourage everyone to vote YES on SB 247.

Travis Irvine
Communications Director and Former Candidate for Governor
Libertarian Party of Ohio
