

Proponent Testimony by Stephanie Thomas on Senate Bill 247, Shelter The
People Cleveland
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
December 2, 2024

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 behalf of Senate Bill 247 (SB 247), a bill to enable a community solar pilot program in Ohio. My name is Stephanie Thomas with Shelter The People Cleveland.

Investing in community solar is an easy win for all Ohioans. Community solar gives Ohioans more choice and allows more Ohioans to see cost-savings from solar energy every month. This policy has been successfully implemented all across the country. According to Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, this bill will grow Ohio's economy by \$3.49 billion, bring in \$409.5 million in lifetime local tax revenue, and create over 27 thousand job years! A pilot program will ensure that community solar is implemented in way that meets the unique needs of Ohio residents and businesses. Over the course of the pilot program, Ohio will have created enough energy to power 250,000 homes. This bill helps make sure that Ohio has the energy it needs to be competitive.

Community solar is a much needed investment for the betterment of the State of Ohio for many reasons, but the primary reason is it helps us to be more financially independent as it provides families and businesses with energy equity, thus allowing us to put more of our money into the local economy.

I am also a member-owner of Cleveland Solar Cooperative, a cooperative business in Greater Cleveland. Cleveland Solar Cooperative is developing community-owned solar arrays utilizing current net-metering policy. SB 247 would make it easier for my cooperative to invest in new arrays and see the benefits of owning solar panels directly on our bills. It opens up responsible solar development on brownfields and distressed sites in our city.

SB 247 is a common-sense win for all Ohioans. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of SB 247.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Thomas.