

On behalf of the more than 2 million pro-life Christians who voiced their support for clean energy as a matter of life as part of the Pro-Life Clean Energy Campaign, we are writing to express our support for Senate Bill 247. The expansion of community solar can and will defend the health and lives of Ohio's children, and provide multiple benefits for Ohio families, the economy, and for the care of God's creation.

As evangelicals committed to defending the life and health of every child, we are pleased that SB 247 would increase the amount of clean, pollution-free energy coming onto the grid. This bill would allow us to provide clean air and clean water for Ohio's children because, unlike fossil fuels, solar panels do not emit pollutants into the atmosphere that cause health harms and contribute to warming. Pollution from carbon-based energy is linked to asthma attacks, other respiratory issues, cancer, and more, and a warmer climate results in increases in occurrences of Lyme disease.

This bill will secure clean, renewable energy that any and all Ohioans can access no matter the barrier. Families who are renters or who live in areas that are shaded would finally be able to benefit from solar. This bill would also allow lower and middle-income families to choose clean energy and save money on their energy bills. Subscribers would benefit from bill credits based on the utility's retail rate, providing guaranteed savings and making clean energy more affordable for participants. The pilot program aims to install 1,500 MW of community solar capacity which is enough solar to power 250,000 homes. Community Solar would benefit all ratepayers by supplying extra energy to the grid during peak demand on hot days when prices are highest, lowering the overall energy burden of families across the state.

As evangelicals who are called to care for God's creation, we are pleased by the conservation benefits of this bill. The Ohio Community Solar Pilot Program, supported by SB 247, promotes responsible and restorative land use by promoting brownfield remediation through private, market-driven development of distressed sites, contributing to environmental cleanup as well as expanding Ohio's energy infrastructure.

This legislation will also unlock the benefits of a clean energy economy for the many Ohioans and their children who are currently at risk of being left behind. It will allow everyone to choose local, reliable, and lower-cost clean energy solutions regardless of income level or housing situation constraints. It also promises to help communities across the state that have been harmed by rising costs of living and local job loss, and support farmers in protecting their land while generating much-needed additional income. The Ohio Community Solar Pilot Program outlined in SB 247 offers significant economic benefits, including \$5.6 billion in gross state product, thousands of family-sustaining careers, including those in the building trades, and \$490 million in local tax revenue for local governments and school districts, as confirmed by a study from Ohio University.

The reality is that Ohio is falling behind other states in the necessary transition to renewable energy. While 24 other states and the District of Columbia have authorized community solar and begun reaping its benefits, Ohio has yet to act. SB 247 would help us reap the economic benefits of solar for ratepayers, communities, and workers while creating energy in ways that minimize the health impact on the hearts, minds, and lungs of our children. The time to act is now.

To defend the health and lives of our children, support Ohio families, and protect and revitalize God's creation, we urge you to support SB 247.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean Van Farowe". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Rev. Dean Van Farowe
EEN Action (advocacy partner of the Evangelical Environmental Network)