

# **Testimony by Bill Wilen 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 Bill Wilen, and I was a member of the Climate Action Plan Committee (CAP) of Kent. The CAP was approved by our Kent City Council and now I am a regular meeting attendee of the Sustainability Commission of Kent which is focused on implementing the CAP.

I have strongly supported “communitizing” the sun to help save us from extinction. That’s why passage of Senate Bill 247 is absolutely essential to transition our towns and cities away from dependence on fossil fuels. The sun is public and free to all of us and can be “communitized” to help solve our major carbon emissions crisis. In terms of electrical energy, solar panels are the best and currently available renewable energy sources. And, the prices are dropping. Small and large communities, including Kent and Akron, should support “communitizing” energy by offering plots of public land open to citizens to own and solarize. We have a 3 acre brownfield in Kent that is available near the city center that could be part of a Community Solar Plot Program. Individuals and small businesses could share the benefits of this local solar energy production. I see “communitization” as the democratic way for us to work together to substantially reduce greenhouse gases and create renewable electric power. The sun is public and we need to “communitize” the sun to survive. This is climate justice in action! Please approve Senate Bill 247 so we can implement it throughout Ohio.

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.

Bill Wilen, Kent, OH