



**Proponent Testimony SB 247
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
December 3rd, 2024**

Chair Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today. My name is Will Kuehnle, and I am an associate director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy, and we are pleased to support Senate Bill 247, to establish the community solar pilot program.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio thanks Senator Lang for introducing SB 247, and we support this legislation based on the Catholic Church's teaching regarding our obligations to care for our common home, to employ innovative means of stewarding our resources, and to attend to the needs of the vulnerable.

Caring for our common home requires public attention to the means of energy production, and SB 247 brings an innovative approach to an all-of-the-above energy strategy in the form of the solar pilot program. These solar energy projects, initiated by private capital, will contribute to a sustainable and diversified portfolio of energy production. As Pope Francis has said, "taking advantage of abundant solar energy will require the establishment of mechanisms," through public policy such as those proposed by SB 247.

One of the fundamental principles of a Catholic social vision is solidarity. Solidarity means caring for one another and for the world, discharging the duty given to our first parents to tend to the earth. Solidarity calls us to ensure that every person has access to the means necessary to provide for health and frugal comfort, including sustainable and resilient sources of energy. Solidarity sees those living near distressed sites identified by SB 247 and extends new opportunities and occasions for development, recognizing the right rooted in human dignity to grow and flourish.

SB 247 exemplifies this principle of solidarity. The Catholic Conference urges a swift passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am happy to answer your questions.