Proponent Testimony by Dean Van Farowe on House Bill 15
Ohio Outreach Coordinator, Evangelical Environmental Network
House Energy Committee
March 19th, 2025

Chairman Holmes, Vice-Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Glassburn, and members of the House Energy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 15 (HB15), a bill that moves Ohio forward on energy generation and consumer choice. My name is Dean Van Farowe, the Ohio Outreach Coordinator representing Evangelical Environmental Network.

Demand for energy is growing in Ohio! Community energy is an important policy to meet demand to help grow our economy and help Ohio families save on their energy bills. Across the country, community energy programs in other states already save ratepayers between 5% and 20% on their bills. Community energy provisions in this bill will install 1,500 mW of capacity - enough to power 250,000 homes! It expands Ohioans choice for how to consume and produce electricity. Community energy promotes responsible and restorative land use by encouraging the development of energy generation on brownfields and distressed sites. Passing HB 15 with Community Energy is a great way to get electrons onto Ohio's grid as fast as possible!

As a pro-life Christian, I support Community Energy because it is wise stewardship. This bill would allow us to redevelop brownfields into solar arrays rather than let them be a blight. It would allow us to steward the air -- and the Ohioans who breathe it -- by protecting it from harmful fossil fuel pollution. Solar development is creating jobs here in Ohio, and utilizing solar arrays in community energy projects will simply add to that growing economic blessing. The sun is a free gift from God -- we are wise to benefit from it.

I am also a member-owner of Cleveland Solar Cooperative, a cooperative business in Greater Cleveland. Cleveland Solar Cooperative is developing community-owned energy utilizing current net-metering policy. HB 15 would make it easier for my cooperative to invest in new generation and see the benefits of community energy directly on our bills. It opens up responsible development on brownfields and distressed sites in our city, turning them from under-utilized blights to sources of community wealth building.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on behalf of HB15.