

Chair Holmes, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Glassburn, and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of House Bill 173. My name is Teresa Ringenbach, and I am the Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Nationwide Energy Partners (NEP).

NEP is an Ohio-based company that offers behind-the-meter construction and energy management services, including submetering, to multifamily properties. We have provided these services for over 25 years across Ohio.

Developers and owners have options on how they receive their public utility supplied service. They can direct meter each unit with a separate utility account or master meter where the whole property is under a single utility account. Developers choose to master meter with submetering because it allows them to meet construction deadlines, increase the speed of construction, and lower the cost of equipment.

Post construction, property owners choose master metering to improve their energy services and gain maintenance insights as well as improve their business NOI without increasing rent. Property owners choose NEP because we do all of this while ensuring their residents never see a bill higher than what they would have paid under a direct metered tariff service scenario. A master meter with submeter arrangement bridges the gap where the property owner is otherwise not incented to provide technologies like EV charging stations without raising rent and residents are not able to pursue energy saving measures on a property they do not own. Some property owners choose to share the value through a bill credit, while others choose to invest in technologies which reduce usage or maintenance costs to offset rent increases.

As a private company, NEP must provide value to our clients, who in turn must provide value to their residents, or the residents will move. Under submetering, the monopoly public utility continues to bring power to the property through a commercial account, a service only they can offer. However, the behind-the-meter services are competitive business decisions of the property owner with service providers.

I have attached additional information about our company. All this information is public, available on our website, through resident portals, and via a fully litigated evidentiary hearing and public transcript on the PUCO website.

HB 173 protects the property owners' access to competitive services by clarifying the definition of public utility and giving the PUCO regulatory authority. An entity does not have to be a public utility for the PUCO to regulate its services. The PUCO regulates thousands of businesses in the energy industry who are in fact not defined as public utilities. The reason the PUCO regulates competitive businesses and separately the PUCO regulates public utilities is because a public utility is a monopoly. When a business is a competitive

business, the statute does not call them a public utility because a public utility cannot operate in the same territory as another public utility. That is why trucking, electric suppliers, gas suppliers and moving companies are not designated as public utilities but are regulated by the PUCO.

In the fall of 2023, the PUCO issued a 167-page order in extreme detail of all aspects of NEP's business and determined that the services of NEP were not the same as a public utility. AEP Ohio's argument that NEP looked like a duck and quacked like a duck fell apart when subjected to scrutiny under oath and with evidence. The PUCO found that NEP, in fact, neither looks like a duck nor quacks like a duck.

HB 173 codifies the PUCO decision on what constitutes a "public utility" and the consumer protections they required in the utility tariffs for a landlord to receive master metering service. The bill not only codifies the PUCO determination on public utility. It also explicitly gives the PUCO explicit authority to promulgate rules and penalties directly onto the industry rather than through utility tariffs, starting from the baseline of a bill cap.

House Bill 173 is a natural next step to the work done with House Bill 15 to ensure Ohio continues to allow competitive solutions for energy. This bill will continue to allow the use of a master meter with submetering which unlocks value for both the owner and the resident, while ensuring the resident never sees a bill higher than what the utility would have provided.

In closing, I would like to correct misinformation about HEAP and low-income programs. NEP's clients have always had access to - and continue to use - HEAP. It is true that a resident must have a bill for service to receive HEAP. And submetering provides that. It is someone who has utilities baked into rent and does not receive a separate bill who cannot qualify for HEAP.

I appreciate the Committee allowing me to testify today and I encourage members to support HB 173.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Teresa Ringenbach  
SVP, Corporate Affairs

## A Higher Standard in Multifamily Energy Services

**No Deposit or Credit Check** – Residents are not subject to credit checks, nor do they need to place a deposit on their energy services.

**No Debt Hammer** – Residents begin with a clean financial slate. Debts owed on past utility accounts do not follow them to their new community as with host utility providers.

**Multifamily Treated as a Commercial Business** – Multifamily properties are treated as commercial businesses, allowing them to participate in wholesale energy markets, install energy-saving technologies, offer green energy options in their communities, and much more.

**Distinct from Other Commercial Businesses** – NEP ‘minds the gap’ between the multifamily commercial and residential elements, improving energy efficiency, reducing operational headaches, and ensuring a better overall property and resident experience.

**No Water Shut Off** – Unlike traditional utilities, NEP does not disconnect water service for past-due account balances, ensuring a health and safety-focused approach preferred by landlords.



### Electric Rate Guarantee

NEP guarantees the resident’s total bill will be at or below the amount that would be charged by the local utility, backed by our industry-leading rate guarantee and annual third-party rate audits.

### 100% Carbon-Free Energy

NEP-serviced communities receive **100% carbon-free energy at no additional cost** to the resident or property. NEP offers carbon neutrality certificate details specific to the community and its usage with traceability to the generator that created the certificate.

### Electric High Usage Alerts\*

Daily, weekly, or monthly alerts to the property for unusually high electric usage in any unit to address issues before they become costly.

### Water High Usage Alerts\*

Alerts for excessive water usage in individual residential units. Leaks can be difficult to detect; even a small leak over a few days can result in costly water bills.



### ApartmentFacts™\*

NEP’s proprietary report provides up to three years of detailed energy usage and cost data for any unit at the property, offering transparency and control.



### Day One Power

No need for tenants to call to connect or disconnect service. NEP integrates with your community’s leasing system to automatically bring power on day one and disconnect service at the lease end with no action required by the resident.

### RateClarity

Our exclusive program monitors over 60 utilities monthly, alerting properties and residents of upcoming rate changes to help them manage their utility budgets more effectively.

### Water Leaks and Credits

NEP identifies potential water leaks, notifies the property management team, encourages prompt repairs, and assists the property in applying for leak credits, if available.

### Multifamily-Specific Energy Insights

A monthly resident newsletter with energy-saving tips and resources tailored to apartment or condo living to help you better understand and manage your electric and water bills.

### Lower Costs

Our partner communities gain greater utility efficiencies, lower construction costs, and streamlined operations, which can reduce overall community utility and rental costs when compared to traditional, individually metered service by the host utility.

### Behind-the-Meter Technology

NEP invests in innovative demand management products and services, such as Ohio-based Armada thermal storage technology, EV charging stations, and proactive operational and management approaches lowering costs and reducing negative resident experiences.

### Experienced Call Center

Our Ohio-based resident support team is comprised of highly trained staff specializing in multifamily electric and water billing. The team answers more than 53,000 calls yearly and responds to nearly 10,000 email messages. They average 4+ years of tenure with NEP, far exceeding the typical industry average of less than one year.

### One Bill for Electric and Water\*

No need to track two or three separate bills for electric, water, and sewer. NEP provides one bill to cover all these services at no additional cost.

*\* Select benefits may be unavailable in some locations. If you have questions, reach out to your leasing office.*

[See More >](#)



### The NEP Difference

NEP must earn its next client. This drives our unwavering dedication to quality, innovation, and resident service. We are proud to deliver an outstanding experience and look forward to serving you and your community.



[NATIONWIDEENERGYPARTNERS.COM](https://www.nationwideenergypartners.com)

*Nationwide Energy Partners (NEP) is an energy services company partnering exclusively with residential complex properties. For over 25 years, we have ensured apartment and condominium residents - and their communities - a better energy experience.*



### Reliable Energy Management

With 25 years of expertise, NEP provides residents the confidence and reliability of a trusted partner in multifamily energy management.

- ☑ Full compliance with all local programs, regulations, and codes, including residential rates and disconnection rules.
- ☑ NEP-installed infrastructure meets and passes all local residential electric code inspections.
- ☑ Lease language aligns with or exceeds the Public Utility Commission guidelines.
- ☑ Accepts financial assistance programs such as medical certifications, HEAP, local pledge programs, and more.
- ☑ Advanced 100% electric smart meters deliver real-time, minute-by-minute data with industry-leading accuracy.

### Unmatched Service Levels

NEP sets the standard for multifamily energy service, delivering reliability, transparency, and personalized support unmatched by other multifamily utility options.

- ☑ Annual onsite infrastructure inspections minimize outages and ensure reliable service.
- ☑ Custom replies to all comments, inquiries, and complaints submitted to your local Better Business Bureau (BBB).
- ☑ Dedicated onsite “NEP Account Manager Days” provide face-to-face support to address your questions and concerns directly.
- ☑ Annual third-party audits ensure accuracy, security, and integrity of metering, data, and rate handling processes.



# Nationwide Energy Partners Benefits

*of Communities Partnering with NEP Energy Services*

