

Proponent Testimony by Jonathan Welle on House Bill 303
Lead Organizer, Cleveland Owns
House Energy Committee
October 1st, 2025

Chairman Holmes, Vice-Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Rader, and members of the House Energy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 303 (HB 303), a bill that moves Ohio forward on energy generation and consumer choice. My name is Jonathan Welle and I am the Lead Organizer representing Cleveland Owns.

Demand for energy continues to rise faster than the supply of energy. It's econ 101, that when demand rises, and supply stays the same, prices go up. And Ohioans have had to shoulder those costs and have seen their energy bills rise by 26% this year. We need policy that gets more energy onto our grid as quickly as possible, invests in Ohio businesses and jobs, and helps Ohio families save on their energy bills. Community Energy does all of that and more, and is the common sense policy Ohioans deserve.

This bill will install 1,500 mW of capacity - enough to power 300,000 homes - and puts those on the distribution grid, bypassing the nearly 3,000 energy projects waiting PJM's approval. It expands Ohioans choice for how to consume and produce electricity. Across the country, community energy programs in other states already save ratepayers between 5% and 20% on their bills. Community energy promotes responsible and restorative land use by encouraging the development of energy generation on brownfields, distressed sites, and commercial roofs. Passing HB 303 with Community Energy is a great way to get electrons onto Ohio's grid as fast as possible!

My neighbors and I deserve to see the benefits of solar!

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 303 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 HB 303.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Welle