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**Testimony of Ryan P. Veith
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Opposition Testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 320
11/29/16**

Opening paragraph: Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairwoman Jones, Ranking Member Gentile, and Members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 320.

Company Background:

I would first like to say a few words about the company I work for. YellowLite solar was founded in 2009 by our CEO Azam Kazmi. We are headquartered in Cleveland and are one of the five largest residential solar installation companies in the state of Ohio. Over the last seven years YellowLite has completed approximately 330 installations as of the present date. We have more than 30 projects waiting to be installed. 90% of our business is conducted within the great State of Ohio. We are proud to have been selected as one of two preferred installers for the OHSUN Cuyahoga County Co-Op.

Ohio Investment:

In the last year we have recently moved into our new headquarters building in Downtown Cleveland. We have renovated the building at a great investment of capital on our part, as well as hired an additional five staff members. In total, our company employees around 25 people, all of whom live and work for us in Ohio. We have plans to expand to offices in Columbus and Cincinnati within 12-18 months. We plan on hiring additional personnel to staff our growing business.

In the United States of America, there are more than 200,000 people working in solar. In contrast, the number of people working in oil, natural gas, and coal combined are around 150,000. Jobs in solar are typically blue collar, well-paid, and cannot be exported overseas.

As a residential and commercial solar installation company, we forecast the elimination of the freeze and the reinstatement of the Renewable Portfolio Standard would increase the rate of solar adoption in our state, help modernize our electricity grid, and grow our state economy. This means thousands of additional jobs. As a company, we would like to hire an additional 10-15 people over the next 18 months.

SB 320:

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In May of 2016, our country passed the one million solar installation mark. It took America 40 years to do so. It is expected to take until the summer of 2018 for another million installations to go up.

Ohio is the 7th most populous state, the 6th largest economy, and we have the 4th most suitable rooftop solar potential in the entire country. Currently, Ohio has just over 2,200 total installations. We rank 23rd in total installed solar capacity. What is needed now for our industry to continue to mature, and for the great state of Ohio to take its rightful place as a regional and national leader, is a reinstatement of the renewable portfolio standards. Such an action would stabilize our market and attract larger projects. This would create good paying jobs and help modernize our electrical grid. We oppose the adoption of SB 320.

Compliance Requirements

What we are most concerned over is the elimination of all compliance requirements for the next 3 years. The proposed legislation would extend the freeze in a de facto manner. The standards were almost unanimously passed in the Ohio General Assembly in 2008 and has increased our state's renewable portfolio from virtually nothing to 2.5%.

Governor Kasich has shown tremendous foresight on energy issues and has called for the RPS freeze to end. We wholeheartedly support the governor's position. With reinstatement, we can achieve our renewable and energy efficiency goals within the term of the RPS.

In December of last year, the federal government extended the Investment Tax Credit for an additional five years. Solar installations internationally have skyrocketed. Consumer adoption across the country and around the world is becoming more prevalent. The mandate for renewable energy is clearly visible at the federal level, the international level, and at the consumer level. Now, we need to see a mandate for renewable energy adoption at the state level. We urge you respectfully and emphatically to oppose SB 320.

I appreciate your time and consideration for my remarks today. I am proud to be here today to support the solar industry. I welcome any questions the committee may have.