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**Testimony of Jay Warmke
Blue Rock Station - Owner
Opposition Testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 320
November 29, 2016**

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.

For the past ten years I have been involved in Ohio's renewable energy industry in a number of capacities. I served as an instructor at Central Ohio Technical College, Zane State University, the University of Dayton, Hiram College, Slippery Rock University, Ohio University and was involved in developing the renewable energy curriculum at Ohio State University.

I am owner of Blue Rock Station, and in that capacity have taught solar PV certification courses to several hundred adults across Ohio. In addition to instruction, Blue Rock Station hosts a 40-acre sustainability center located just south of Zanesville -and has attracted over 30,000 visitors to the region during the last decade. I have authored about a dozen textbooks on renewable energy and serve as vice president of Green Energy Ohio as well as serve as the Sustainable Energy Committee Chair for the Electronic Technician's Association (an international association with over 28,000 members).

My primary motivation in testifying today is to try to ensure that the students I train will find good, high paying jobs here in Ohio.

I am not here to request or defend governmental preferences for one industry over another. I believe that renewable energy will come to dominate our energy landscape with or without the assistance of government. And that is as it should be. Basic marketplace economics will ultimately determine what technology succeeds and which industries fail.

The issue before the committee today, as I see it, is whether or not Ohio will remain competitive in relationship to other states. The reality is that a renewable energy portfolio standard provides an economic incentive for businesses and projects to locate within the borders of the state where the RPS is in place.

The solar industry will grow regardless of the action of this committee. In the past 10 years, the industry has experienced an annual compounded rate of growth of over 60%. Today nearly 240,000 people work in the solar industry across the US. More people work in solar than work in the coal industry (only 70,000). More people work in solar than in oil and gas extraction (185,000). The solar

industry is growing at a rate 12 times that of the economy as a whole. (*George Washington University study and Fortune Magazine*).

In 2013, Ohio ranked 8th in solar jobs when compared with all other states in the union. Just two years later, that ranking has dropped to 11th place.

The students who graduate from the courses I teach WILL find jobs. The industry as a whole is constantly seeking qualified installers, sales people, designers and manufacturers. These jobs are good jobs with starting salaries between \$40,000 to \$50,000. And they are by their very nature geographically stable.

I would like them to find these jobs in Ohio, not in Colorado or New Jersey because the legislation in those states makes the job market more robust. This is a young industry. Investors move to pluck the low hanging fruit. If an investor can get an 8% return on an installation in New Jersey but only a 6% return on their investment in Ohio – they will select New Jersey. And the jobs will follow.

From my perspective, the issue before the committee is not that of selecting one industry over another. It is not a moral question or a question of trying to intervene in the marketplace. When the legislature provides a tax incentive to the motion picture industry it is not a statement in favor of movies over television. It is an attempt to lure jobs to Ohio.

The reality is that Ohio is in competition with other states to establish this new and promising solar industry. 29 states have renewable portfolio standards in place. Many are expanding these to lure more jobs to their region. Massachusetts is ranked second, only behind California, in the number of jobs in solar installation. This is not because Massachusetts is the sunshine capital of the US. Legislation such as the RPS makes a difference.

Allowing the resumption of the RPS will help create Ohio jobs. It will help make Ohio a major player in an industry that will dominate our economy for decades to come. Surveys show that 80% of the voters in the state of Ohio support the idea of a renewable energy portfolio standard.

How often do you get the opportunity to expand jobs, build an industry and make voters happy – all by doing nothing? Allowing the RPS to resume WILL create Ohio jobs

I appreciate your time and consideration today. I welcome any questions the committee may have.