



Opponent Testimony of House Bill 118
House Public Utilities Committee
David Kell
Madison County Chamber of Commerce
March 23, 2021

Dear Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit opposition testimony for House Bill 118. My name is David Kell and I am the Executive Director of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Established in 1959, the Chamber works closely with community governments, hospitals, schools, libraries, residents, developers, farmers, businesses and non-profits to cultivate people, business and agriculture.

We recognize that a community is an ecosystem of business and economic development, education and training, culture, recreation, health care, agriculture, and services such as police, fire and transportation.

We take a balanced view to development and believe that utility-scale solar offers a unique opportunity to create a significant capital investment in our community through the construction of a world class facility clean energy facility. The revenues from this project will create sustaining wealth for our community—providing annual payments from the facility to our schools, county, and townships.

The project developers in our community met with everyone. They educated and worked with our community in a true partnership that created trust and goodwill.

Additionally, months after solar projects began to be discussed in Madison County, I started to receive calls from developers and brokers to talk about economic base employers that had interest in coming to our community. The reason? Renewable energy, specifically solar, coming to Madison County.

A 2020 Ohio University report concludes that Ohio utility-scale solar could bring over \$18 billion in economic impacts to Ohio and create almost 55,000 jobs in the state. The first utility-scale solar project to break ground in Brown County is a \$280 million in construction and equipment investment, creates over 450 construction jobs, and \$72 million to local schools, the county, and township, and other investments made to the community.

Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118 send a signal to companies wanting to do business in Ohio that their investments will not be protected. The retroactive nature of this legislation would have companies who have already invested in our communities completely unsure what the future holds for their project. As an economic development official, I believe that business certainty is extremely important—for solar and any other industry in Ohio.

I respectfully ask the committee and members of the Ohio Senate to work with the solar industry and better understand the significant benefits to solar in Ohio communities.

Sincerely,

David Kell
Madison County Chamber of Commerce