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Before the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee

Interested Party Testimony on HB 118

March 23, 2021

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

On behalf of One Columbus, the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region, I write today to discuss House Bill 118, "Revise law governing wind farms and solar facilities." This legislation will have a significant, negative impact on economic development and job creation across the State of Ohio. Most importantly, this bill will reduce our ability to compete globally for talent, new businesses and capital investment across our 88 counties. As we compete for new development and investment in Central Ohio, we pride ourselves in our ability for state government, local businesses, and key stakeholders to work together to do what is best for our companies and hard-working Ohioans.

Currently, the Columbus Region has more than 15 companies considering capital investment amounts of over \$14 billion, in turn creating over 20,000 jobs. Each of those investment opportunities either require or prefer renewables as the source of energy. Over the past ten years, the price of solar power has dropped significantly, so much that it is at price parity with conventional power. Between these lower prices and environmental, social and governance goals (ESG) and other internal scorecards, companies in the Region continue to invest in locally sourced solar power. From the construction of just six of the ten new solar projects approved or pending approval in Central Ohio, nearly 6,000 construction jobs and over 200 permanent jobs will be generated. Moreover, greater than \$13 million in annual tax revenue will be generated. Once these projects are completed, they will provide competitive electric pricing to 155 facilities employing a total of 118,500 people.

One of the largest supporters of solar power in Central Ohio is our automotive suppliers. With over 22,000 people employed at these facilities, future solar energy projects will continue to be a part of their plan to grow and prosper. Companies like Honda, Ford, General Motors, Nissan, Toyota and Fiat Chrysler, all of

which have aggressive renewable energy goals, employ 65% of their Central Ohio workforce in the 10 counties directly outside of Franklin County.

The automotive supplier industry is not the only Ohio industry to be harmed by House Bill 118. The clean energy industry, which Ohio currently ranks at 8th in the country in jobs, employs over 114,000 Ohioans. HB 118 attacks this growing industry and hinders our ability for future investment in companies that already exist throughout the state as well as the attraction of new business ventures. In the Central Ohio Region alone, the clean energy industry employs 21,537 Ohioans, over 8,000 of which are employed outside of Franklin County.

To ensure Ohio continues to boast a highly diversified base of companies, with no industry representing more than 18% of employment, we must provide options for a renewable, reliable and diverse energy portfolio. Ohio's energy policies must remain a vibrant and economically healthy state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenny McDonald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kenny" being larger and more prominent than the last name "McDonald".

Kenny McDonald

President and CEO, One Columbus