

House Public Utilities Committee
June 23, 2021
SB 52

Testimony for Jared Wren, Vice President, Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition (USSEC)

Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify and share a brief statement on behalf of the Utility Scale Solar Energy Coalition of Ohio.

Chairman, we appreciate the opportunity afforded to us by you to participate in an interested party meeting this past week and believe that the ability to have an open and honest dialogue will help to achieve a better outcome for our industry and interested parties—like business, labor, farmers, landowners, and community members near our projects.

Utility-scale solar development is one of the most significant and promising economic engines for a 21st-century economy in Ohio. Utility-scale solar companies are making significant investments in Ohio, creating jobs, increasing local tax revenues, and supporting regional manufacturing, and economic development.

A 2020 Ohio University report concludes that Ohio utility-scale solar could bring over \$18 billion in economic impacts to Ohio and create thousands of jobs in the state. Of those individuals, at least 80 percent, if not more, will be Ohio residents. These employees and their families live and work in Ohio and their tax-dollars support their local communities.

Additionally, this month, First Solar in Northwest Ohio announced it will invest \$680 million to build a manufacturing plant in Wood County, which will add 500 jobs to their workforce of 1,000+. It is estimated that 30% of the components used in Ohio utility-scale developments are made in Ohio. Even more products will be made in Ohio as a result of manufacturers choosing to locate here because of the developing solar industry.

To that end, the changes made to SB 52 take a step in the right direction to recognize the significant amount of investment that solar companies have made over the years, under good faith we had in current law. We remain concerned that even with the changes made to SB 52, we will see a reduction in growth of solar development. However, because of the willingness of the bill sponsors to make significant changes to the bill, USSEC will be taking a neutral position on SB 52. We'd like to thank Chairman Hoops for his leadership in forging this compromise.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to share this directly with the committee and happy to take any questions.