

## Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition

Ohio House Public Utilities Committee  
Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Testimony of Bruce Burcat, Executive Director  
Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition

Substitute Senate Bill No. 52, Renewable Energy Siting

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Ray and Members of the Committee,

The Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition (MAREC) opposes Substitute Senate Bill No. 52. However, we do appreciate the efforts of the Senate and House sponsors and this Committee for working with solar and wind industry members to improve the bill, which is reflected in the recently introduced substitute version.

MAREC is a coalition of wind and solar energy companies dedicated to promoting renewable energy in the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond. Many of our members are active in Ohio and have collectively invested several billion dollars across the state. They enjoy a rich pipeline of new projects in various stages of development — including some pending at the Siting Board right now, representing tens of millions of tax dollars for schools and localities, millions in lease revenues for farmers and other landowners, and thousands of skilled trade construction jobs.

I testified on behalf of MAREC in the Senate Committee hearing on the bill and do believe that the current substitute has been significantly improved, but still presents some real areas of concern for the solar and wind industries. First, while we understand that the bill is intended to provide greater ability for local communities to have a say in the siting decisions affecting their communities, the bill singles out renewable energy (specifically wind and solar energy) for this treatment. No other energy resource will undergo this additional level of oversight, including the potential for completely zoning out of their resource or a specific project by local communities. As the bill is currently constituted, there will be **both** state and local oversight of these renewable projects, in essence two bites at the apple, something that is not done in other states.

We also believe that the bill would set in motion the ability of local governing authorities to take away the rights of landowners to utilize their land in a way they would like to use it. For instance, a farmer could help keep his or her farm in business by utilizing the revenues from a solar farm leasing their property. It is a long-term stable level of revenue that pays multiples of crops on that land and is not subject to adverse weather conditions. At the

end of the lease, the solar panels or wind turbines will be removed, and the land will be able to be farmed once again.

In closing, MAREC and our members continue to stand ready to discuss the siting process in Ohio and how it can be improved. We believe the state can strike a balance, whereby local communities can be educated about projects in their area and fully participate in the permitting process without harming the economic opportunities clean energy can bring to Ohio. As a multi-jurisdictional regional industry organization, we again appreciate the opportunity we have had to participate in discussions to improve this legislation but feel compelled to provide concerns that we continue to have over the impacts of the bill in the recent substitute version.

Thank you.