



Sponsor Testimony

State Representative Brian Baldrige

House Bill 450

Chairman Hoops, Vice-Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to stand before you today to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 450. The intent of this bill is to foster the creation of community solar in Ohio as a creative solution to allow for energy generation on sites where it once was.

Community Solar is defined as a solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, which allows the benefits project to flow to multiple customers such as individuals, business, and nonprofits. This bill would allow for a total of 3,000 megawatts to be produced in Ohio with 1,000 of those megawatts reserved for production on brownfields or distressed sites. Additionally, this legislation caps a community solar project developed on a greenfield site to a generation capacity of 10 megawatts, whereas projects reserved for distressed sites may have a larger capacity of 45 megawatts.

For roughly half of a century, my home county of Adams was a part of the solution to energy generation in our state. When two coal fire power plants closed, most of my community's jobs and tax revenue went with them. Not only did these closures have a devastating impact economically, but Adams County is now left with hundreds of acres of brownfields. My goal with this legislation is to provide a viable option for economic development through energy generation, especially on sites which are in such close proximity to existing energy infrastructure.

Of course, it was not just Adams County that the shifts in energy generation affected, but rather the entire Appalachian region experienced these kinds of closures. That is why this legislation requires 50% of megawatts on distressed sites to be developed in Appalachia. I feel it is important to reserve access to this program for communities that were so integral in this space for many years. Additionally, this bill would allow for developers to make use of the \$500 Million Brownfield Remediation grant funds passed as a part of our recent budget bill.

After numerous drives passed the capped ash ponds left behind by these closures in my district, I could not help but think that these are the kinds of sites we should be looking to for energy generation projects. This bill simply opens up another avenue for economic and energy development here in Ohio. Chairman Hoops, Vice-Chairman Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to stand before you today and I would be glad to answer any questions.