

Chair James Hoop

Co-Chair Sharon Ray

Ranking Member Ken Smith

Ohio House Public Utilities Committee

I write in support of HB 450 enabling community solar projects (CSP). Currently, Ohio law and regulations only allow connection of personal solar systems to the grid at the point of metering for the owner. My wife and I own and enjoy the benefit of such a system. It allows us to reduce our environmental impact and to reduce our home utility costs. This is only possible because we own our own home. Renters of any economic means, rich, middle class, and poor, are specifically excluded from these possible advantages.

HB 450 will allow all to participate in the benefits of solar energy by installing centrally located community based solar systems and allowing anyone to participate in partial ownership of the system. By requiring the investor owned utilities to provide virtual net metering, each owner of the CSP will be able to see the output of the CSP on their bills. This allows them to not only reduce their utility costs but also to provide the environmental benefits of such a system to their communities.

HB450 is especially important to economically disadvantaged people in our state because it allows the participant in the CSP to transfer the net metering to their next rental property when moving within the utility's territory. It will also allow for partial buy in at as small a level as one panel and to grow that participation over time. I applaud the additional set aside of capacity for Appalachia and encourage you to add a similar set aside for our inner cities. Being poor is being poor whether one lives in rural southeast Ohio, or in the inner sections of our urban areas. And, only limiting the set aside to Appalachia, favors a majority white population. We need to make this program available to all, regardless of race or color.

Now is the time to enable CSP's and virtual net metering and I urge you to pass this legislation

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Craig A. Foster

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