

Dear distinguished members of the Public Utilities Committee,

I support HB 450 — Community Solar, and urge you to be supportive also. Please include this proponent testimony in your deliberations this week.

The National Renewable Energy Lab has studied Community Solar and published a short summary <https://www.nrel.gov/state-local-tribal/community-solar.html> detailing the positive aspects of programs in nearly two dozen states. In short, the benefits are many and both blue and red states have passed/changed laws to make it happen.

The short list of benefits are jobs, clean air, grid resilience, access by renters, and cheaper rates for consumers (a Columbus Dispatch article "Energy costs on the march. Are solar, wind, and other renewable energy to blame?" from OSU Economics Professor, Dr Brent Sohngen, pointed out a recent trend—solar energy actually puts downward pressure on electricity rates). <https://u.osu.edu/aede/2021/10/20/energy-costs-on-the-march-are-solar-wind-and-other-renewable-energy-to-blame/>

It is no surprise that HB 450 has supporters from both sides of the isles. Democrats and Republicans are ready to move this legislation forward because Community Solar helps ensure cheaper rates as fossil fuels become more expensive. I'd be in favor of even more use of brownfield sites and closed landfill sites in this legislation to insulate us from fossil fuel price hikes. These hikes are coming.

Natural gas rates are already increasing this season resulting in higher electricity generation costs. Coal emissions-related costs, both in terms of generation, the environmental impact, and healthcare are still going up. The only cost trend going down is for solar power. <https://earthtechling.com/solar-energy-costs-trends/>. In many places, solar generation costs have reached parity with coal/natural gas electricity generation costs and continue to fall. What's not to like about making solar power more accessible.

I'm hopeful that our utility companies see the benefits but expect some to say Community Solar is an extra burden to them or will be an extra burden to non-subscribers. 22 states have figured out ways to mitigate these burdens and so can Ohio. It will require teamwork and the sooner our more hesitant utilities embrace Community Solar the better.

In summary, to those opposing Community Solar, I'd ask them one simple question: Do you have another plan for clean power that is getting cheaper, that will bring not only solar industry jobs to Ohio but also large businesses with lofty clean energy goals who just don't have enough rooftop space for solar but want to move here?

In summary, please look with favor and support this legislation. It just makes sense on so many levels.

Respectfully,

Joe Fulford

