

John Webster, Ohio Resident
Individual Testimony in Support of House Bill 450
Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
November 10, 2021

Thank you to Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee. My name is John Webster, resident of Dublin, Ohio. I support HB 450. I will keep this short and mention three reasons.

One, HB 450 allows me and others a chance to participate in the growing solar movement. According to the website Solstice.US, over 80% of Americans cannot access rooftop solar for various reasons. Because I rent, I am one of the people who does not have the option to switch to solar. HB 450 can give people like me a chance to participate through community solar.

A second reason I support HB 450 is there is significant research showing that solar energy is not a threat to customers or utilities. According to a 2016 report by the Brookings Institution “Net metering... frequently benefits all ratepayers when all costs and benefits are accounted for...” Utility companies will still collect money and get cost recovery from net-metered customers and should not suffer either. Local conditions must be taken into account, but there is good research showing utility companies and customers will be fine.

Finally, I will mention one larger financial reason. Energy changes are coming. We can start to change now and figure things out, or we can lag and scramble. Groups are divesting from fossil fuels, including religious organizations, philanthropies, governments, and financial companies. For example, BlackRock—the world biggest fund manager, and the Gates Foundation are both starting to move out of fossil fuels. Enough momentum is in the business pipeline to eventually change energy markets. Incremental measures such as HB 450 will allow us to proceed in a thoughtful, planned-out way as the energy situation changes.

There are other reasons to support HB 450, such as jobs and healthcare and especially the use of vacant spaces, but to conclude I will reiterate my three reasons. Again, HB 450 provides for community solar use, is unlikely to hurt utility companies or customers, and for financial reasons change will come anyway. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to voice my support for this important bill.

Cordially,

John Webster