



November 10, 2021

Dear Chair and Members of the Public Utilities Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 450. My name is Tristan Rader, I am the Program Director for Solar United Neighbors of Ohio. Since 2016 we have educated thousands of Ohio residents about rooftop solar and helped hundreds add solar to their homes, businesses, and non-profit rooftops.

One of the biggest barriers that people face when they are considering going solar is that they don't have a suitable roof, or they may not own the home they live in. In fact, one-third of Ohioans rent, and that number is growing. HB 450 would allow this sizable group of people to buy into Ohio's energy future and participate in community solar projects around the state.

With another 1.6 million people in homeowners associations and other places that may restrict solar arrays, there is a vast market for community solar. Ohio has seen growth in recent years in the solar industry, with more than 300 solar installers, 6,500 well-paying jobs, and almost 800,000 kilowatts installed to date, enough solar to power 100,000 homes.

Looking forward, Ohio's solar industry has great potential for rapid growth. The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) projects that with a favorable policy atmosphere, such as the passage of HB 450, the solar industry could easily see 700% growth over the next five years. This means 30,000+ new high-paying jobs, a more resilient grid, and Ohio could be a national leader in the country on clean energy job growth.

With community solar as a choice for consumers, solar projects could be built on rural brownfields, vacant land in the inner city, parking lots, churches, and schools. People who live around these projects can subscribe, save money, and benefit from clean energy year-round.

We believe strongly that equity of access is critical to the success of the solar industry in Ohio. We recommend that HB 450 be amended to include a provision that sets aside 250MW for specific low to moderate-income subscriber projects. New Mexico and other states have set-asides for low to moderate-income solar projects, and they have proved to be very popular and successful and make solar accessible to everyone.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee and I would strongly recommend the adoption of HB 450. Let's position Ohio to take advantage of the explosive growth of the clean energy sector.

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Tristan Rader
Program Director
Solar United Neighbors of Ohio