

TESTIMONY OF ERICA McCONNELL
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OHIO HOUSE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF HB 450
5/24/22

Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Smith and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Erica McConnell and I am an attorney for the Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC). ELPC is a regional organization that works on energy issues in states across the Midwest. ELPC has consistently supported solar development in Ohio as an important component of a balanced energy portfolio for the state.

Before coming to ELPC a few months ago, I worked on solar and renewable energy policy across the United States, representing the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC). I participated in the implementation of community solar programs in various states, including in Minnesota, which has had a successful community solar gardens program for several years. The community solar program proposed in HB 450 reflects many of the best practices and lessons learned from other states.

ELPC supports HB 450 because it is a balanced approach to encouraging the development of community solar in Ohio. Community solar refers to solar projects developed to sell the power to subscribers who want to support clean energy. Solar panels produce no pollution and benefit all Ohioans by helping with our air quality. The one thousand megawatts of development allowed under the law, and phased in over a four-year period, allows the utilities to gain experience connecting systems to the grid in limited increments. Moreover, the law ensures that the projects will be developed proportionally across the service territories of all four electric distribution utilities, which will ensure that development takes place throughout the state.

Additionally, HB 450 has an important component that will help clean up brownfields. ELPC is particularly supportive of the provisions in Section 4928.851 (B) that allow for the development of solar on distressed sites in the Appalachian region. These projects will not only help clean up sites, they will bring jobs to the region and help with air quality over time.

ELPC also notes that the pricing in the bill is fair to all parties, and will provide the certainty needed for developers to move forward with new projects without overburdening non-participating ratepayers. We think this framework will produce real results for Ohioans.

Our testimony is short today because the bill is well written and straight forward. We believe it will provide Ohio utility customers an opportunity to benefit with both bill savings and a cleaner environment. It constitutes a good start to community solar and we urge that the Committee pass it quickly. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.