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Proponent Testimony
Senate Energy & Public Utilities
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Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams and Members of the Committee, I write as a proponent of SB 52.

Our community is experiencing firsthand a utility scale power siting case with overwhelming opposition by citizens, townships, villages, and county planning commissions. With nearly unanimous opposition, there is still a strong sense of helplessness throughout the community. Citizens are fighting an uphill battle in an OPSB process that strongly favors energy companies with unlimited resources to plead their case.

We recognize the challenge faced by Ohio legislators to balance the advancement of alternative energy with public satisfaction. The current power siting process, as it stands, fails to strike that balance. The concerns of local citizens are heard only if the citizens can navigate a complex judicial process that is challenging even for the most experienced lawyers. Local trustees are forced to allocate significant portions of their miniscule budgets to hire legal counsel just to represent their communities in the OPSB siting process.

While employing a team of legal, political, and technical professionals is just the small price of doing business for large energy developers, that is not an option for most concerned Ohio citizens. We are not multimillion dollar corporations. We are farmers, teachers, plumbers, civil servants, and parents. Most importantly, we are voting members of the communities most impacted by these projects; the same voting members who elected officials like you to represent us. While that representation is necessary, it is also imperative that we, as citizens, retain the power to make decisions at the lowest level practical. That is what HB118 and SB52 offer us. These bills give citizens of local communities a seat at the table, which is a cornerstone of our democratic process.

Opposition to these bills will come in two forms. First, from the corporations that continue to smugly exploit Ohio's flawed siting process. And secondly, from state political figures who prioritize corporate profits and arbitrary energy goals over the quality of life of Ohio residents. I urge you to strongly consider approval of these bills

that empower passionate Ohio communities to take control of their own front yards. Important decisions like utility scale power siting should be made at the local level, with *support* from the OPSB to ensure siting is done efficiently, effectively, and fairly.