



Testimony of Luke Sulfridge

Solar United Neighbors of Ohio, Program Director

Opposition Testimony for Ohio House Bill 114

10/17/2017

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien, and Members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to testify in opposition to House Bill 114.

I am the Program Director of Solar United Neighbors of Ohio (formerly known as OH SUN) and a resident of southeast Ohio. Solar United Neighbors has programs in 9 states and has helped over 2,300 homes and businesses go solar represented over 17MW of distributed power generation.

Solar Neighbors of Ohio has helped nearly 150 homeowners go solar over the past year representing 1MW of distributed solar. We are also actively engaged with thousands more solar supporters and those who have gone solar. Individuals and businesses who have invested money are expecting consistency in policy.

Other Solar United Neighbors state programs see the "pay-back" periods for solar cut to as little as a third of what it is in Ohio. This is a direct result of those states having a meaningful renewable energy standard.

People are hungry for solar and ready to invest private capital. However, the uncertainty of the Renewable Portfolio Standard is leaving many more waiting. As it stands, we have seen 3 million dollars invested in distributed solar through local community solar co-ops this past year. This represents fifty new jobs in solar that were created or sustained. Imagine how many more could have been created were it not for the "freeze" and proposed bills like HB 114.

According to the [Solar Job Census](#), the solar industry is growing nationwide by 20% year on year with new solar jobs averaging \$19 per hour. This is 12 times the national average for job growth. Ohio is falling behind without a renewable portfolio standard. Ohio's approximately sixty installers are ready to grow their businesses.

Every day that Ohio's RPS remains uncertain is a day that Ohio loses out on new jobs in energy and beyond. Employers are now demanding clean energy when they locate to a state. The RPS serves as a mechanism to allow homeowners and small businesses to help build a clean modern distributed power system in Ohio. Distributed energy also makes Ohio stronger and more resilient. The more energy is being produced locally, the less money is leaving the state and the more we are prepared in times of need. Ohio needs clean local power. We all benefit. Savings for the all energy consumers are also realized through decreased reliance on stand-by generators because peak demand is often also when solar is producing at peak.

Ohio remains the only state to roll back its Renewable Portfolio Standard. It was Iowa, a mid-western state that created the idea which allowed the market to help shape the most efficient deployment of renewable energy. Twenty-eight other states remain committed to the model. The Ohio RPS was passed with nearly unanimous bi-partisan support. We are now asking lawmakers to reject this legislation and others that attempt send Ohio backwards on energy policy. We urge this committee to reject House Bill 114.

I appreciate your time and consideration today. I welcome any questions the committee may have.