



Testimony of Luke Sulfridge

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Opposition Testimony for Ohio House Bill 114

06/20/2020

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 and a resident of southeast Ohio. Solar United Neighbors has programs in 9 states and has helped over 3,000 homes and businesses go solar representing over 23MW of distributed power generation. That includes over 160 distributed solar generators in Ohio. 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 over 3 million dollars invested in distributed solar through local community solar co-ops. 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 meaningful 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. A reduction or curtailment in the standard makes no sense at a time when neighboring states like Michigan and Pennsylvania are moving forward. 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.