



# Ohio Citizen Action

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**Ohio House Public Utilities Committee  
Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, and Ranking Member Weinstein  
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 197  
Testimony of Rachael Belz  
CEO, Ohio Citizen Action**

September 20, 2023

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and Members of the House Public Utilities Committee, my name is Rachael Belz, and I'm the CEO of Ohio Citizen Action. I thank you for the opportunity to present our support for House Bill 197 (HB 197).

This testimony is presented on behalf of Ohio Citizen Action's 48,500 members and supporters and all Ohioans who stand to benefit from the passage of HB 197.

House Bill 197 would create Ohio's first Community Solar Pilot Program. Under the legislation, renters, condo owners, and most small to medium-sized businesses who cannot install rooftop solar would have the opportunity to benefit from clean, renewable solar energy. Individuals and businesses subscribe to a "share" in a local solar project. Those who join receive a credit on their monthly utility bills, with the size of your share determining how much of a credit that will be received.

In addition to expanding the reach of renewable energy, the Ohio Community Solar Pilot Program will provide guaranteed savings to subscribing customers, typically within the 10-20% range. Programs such as these create real, tangible economic impacts for local communities by creating jobs at home. These benefits are being seen in other states, and we support bringing these benefits to Ohio.

Ohioans support home-grown energy and reliability. Under the pilot program, community solar project developers pay for system upgrades and grid improvements needed to make their programs work. This increases capacity and resiliency for Ohioans near the projects.

As a pilot program, House Bill 197 requires a review to assess the program's success and determine future programs, offering a safety net for the projects and Ohioans.

It's time for Ohio to take a step forward in promoting renewable, Ohio-produced energy at the community level. We have the workforce and the consumer support necessary to make the Ohio Community Solar Pilot Program a success. It does not require large parcels of land or the long-term cost of added transmission lines, but rather thrives on flexibility and lower costs.

Ohio Citizen Action supports House Bill 197, the Ohio Community Solar Pilot Program, and we urge your support as well. Thank you for this opportunity.