



**Solar United Neighbors**  
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 197**  
**Ohio House Public Utilities Committee**  
**Apr 24, 2024**

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Public Utilities Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. My name is Tristan Rader, and I serve as the Ohio Director for Solar United Neighbors, an organization dedicated to representing rooftop solar homeowners and fostering community solar development here in Ohio and across the county. We have organized over 16,500 solar supporters in Ohio since 2016, many of whom have expressed strong support for community solar.

Today, I wish to underscore the critical nature of House Bill 197, which would establish Ohio's first Community Solar Pilot Program. This legislation is not just about promoting renewable energy; it's about making it accessible to a broader demographic, including those who cannot install rooftop systems due to logistical constraints.

Just this week, Ohio made significant advancements in renewable energy funding, securing \$312 million through two grants from the Solar for All program, administered by the US EPA. Notably, the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority was awarded a \$156 million grant to enhance solar accessibility across the state. We commend their successful efforts in securing this grant, which marks a pivotal advancement for renewable energy in Ohio.

The passage of House Bill 197 would dramatically increase the reach of these grants. While the grants can be allocated to both community solar and rooftop solar projects, community solar has the unique potential to benefit a much larger number of Ohioans, especially those in regulated utility territories. By approving this bill, we can ensure these funds reach the widest possible audience, providing significant energy cost savings and fostering economic growth within more communities.

The Community Solar Pilot Program proposed by HB 197 is designed to bolster our energy infrastructure without placing a financial burden on consumers. Developers will bear the cost of essential grid improvements, enhancing capacity and resilience statewide. This strategic approach not only supports economic growth but also ensures a sustainable energy future for Ohio.

With strong public and legislative support already manifesting through these committee hearings, it is evident that Ohio is ready to embrace community solar. Our members, in

communities across Ohio, are excited about community solar. I urge you to continue this momentum and support the passage of House Bill 197, thereby enabling the transformative benefits of the Solar for All grants to be fully realized in our state.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Ohio's energy future.

Sincerely,



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