



Chairman Stein, Vice-Chair Blasdel, and Ranking Member Weinstein, thank you for the opportunity to provide this proponent testimony in **support of House Bill 197** (HB 197).

My name is Christian Koch and I am submitting this written only testimony on behalf of the Ceres [Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy](#) (BICEP) Network, a coalition of more than 85 major employers across the United States, including many with significant operations and facilities in Ohio.

The BICEP Network supports HB 197 because the creation of a Community Solar Pilot Program supports the development of renewable energy generation, expands equitable access to renewable energy, assists efforts to reduce burdens on our state's energy grid, and fosters economic growth.

HB 197 also aids local job creation, greater access to renewable energy, improves air quality, and diversifies Ohio's energy mix.

Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia have community solar policies in place, a list that continues to grow every year. In Minnesota, which has the largest community solar program in the nation, community solar gardens are responsible for half the amount of solar electricity installed in the state, which grew from 32MW in 2015 to 1508MW in 2021.

Establishing a community solar program in the Buckeye State will drive new investments and enable more Ohio businesses, residents, and communities to benefit from the state's solar resources. Despite tremendous growth in renewable energy technology, nearly half of households and businesses are still unable to host on-site solar arrays due to a variety of factors, including lack of building ownership and insufficient roof space.

Community solar programs, like HB 197, address these barriers by allowing electricity customers the option to subscribe to a local solar project, while avoiding other consumer barriers such as upfront capital expenditures and the operational risks of owning a power generation system. Such opportunities can help unlock the benefits of renewable energy for low and moderate-income Ohioans who have been priced out of the market or have limited suitable rooftop options.

HB 197 would also bolster grid reliability by shrinking the distance between where electricity is generated and where it is used. Shortening this distance increases grid efficiency and reduces the need for costly investments in transmission and distribution infrastructure. Similarly, HB 197 helps build grid resiliency by expanding the diversity of the types of electric generation produced by the grid.

Aside from the benefits to renewable energy generation and grid reliability, HB 197 also stands to benefit Ohio's economy. A study from the Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, found the economic impact of HB 197's community solar program



includes \$5.56 billion in gross output, \$3.49 billion in gross state product, 27,254 Ohio job years, and \$409.5 million in lifetime local tax revenues.

In closing, the Ceres BICEP Network urges your favorable consideration of HB 197 because its enactment will provide economic development opportunities for the state, help all Ohioans have access to renewable generation options, and strengthen the energy grid.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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