

Sub House Bill 197  
Proponent Testimony of Charles W. Keiper II before  
The Ohio House of Representatives  
House Public Utilities Committee  
May 22, 2024

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on Sub HB 197.

My name is Chuck Keiper. I come before you as the CEO and Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC). NOPEC is a non-profit regional council of governments that provides retail electricity and natural gas aggregation service to customers from more than 240 member communities throughout 19 counties in the state of Ohio. As the largest public retail energy aggregation in Ohio, NOPEC serves about 900,000 residential and small business electricity and natural gas customers.

NOPEC supports this community solar bill. Development of community solar projects in Ohio will benefit Ohioans by developing new solar projects in Ohio where the load is located, and in locations where the local communities and residents support and participate in the projects. Community solar legislation has been adopted in 24 states to date. It is time for Ohio to do so.

NOPEC has been increasingly focused on sustainability goals in planning for future energy supply for our member communities and customers. We have developed, and continue to develop, programs to meet customer needs. We offer a 100% Green Community Choice program for our communities that want this offering as the standard NOPEC electricity product for residents in their communities, as well as a 100% Green electricity product for individual customers to select. Each of these NOPEC products use Green certified Renewable Energy Credits (REC's) to achieve a green supply. Most, if not all, of these REC's are purchased from renewable projects outside of Ohio, because it is difficult to purchase enough REC's from in-state projects for NOPEC's needs as most are committed to large electricity users, and the number of new solar or wind projects being constructed in Ohio with uncommitted REC's is declining.

The demand for renewable attributes to benefit Ohio residential and small commercial customers in Ohio, and not just the largest electricity users, is why NOPEC believes the aggregation provisions in the bill in Section 4934.071 provide additional benefits from this legislation. As Ohio's largest retail governmental aggregator, NOPEC would like to assist financially in getting the community solar projects built by having the opportunity to buy the renewable attributes from the community solar projects solar fields in Ohio, as well as the renewable energy from solar fields. And NOPEC would like to use those renewable energy attributes and resources in our electricity aggregation to make them available to nearly half a million Ohio households we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of Sub HB 197.