



## Ohio Environmental Council [Action Fund]

Tuesday, May 24th, 2022

To: Members of the Ohio House of Representatives  
From: Trish Demeter, Interim President, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund  
Re: Senate Bill 61

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing to inform you that the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund will be scoring Senate Bill 61 for the purposes of our Legislative Scorecard for the 134th Ohio General Assembly. **We urge a YES vote on SB 61.** To the extent that SB 61 passes, the OEC Action Fund will be doing extensive public education on the content and the votes on this legislation due to its positive impact to Ohio's environment and the health of Ohioans.

**Senate Bill 61 eliminates market barriers for solar development and increases access to the cost savings on-site renewable energy provides.** The OEC Action Fund has members living in condominiums and planned communities who care deeply about living in a community that values sustainable practices to ensure clean air and clean water for its residents, and who also care deeply about their community's history, aesthetics and unique character. The OEC Action Fund is a proponent of SB 61's provisions that generally allow for solar energy collection devices in these communities. The bill, as written, strikes a balance between preserving the character of planned communities while also enabling residents to make clean energy choices on their private property.

The benefits of rooftop solar are many. Individuals that install systems begin seeing a reduction in their electricity bills immediately, and the payback period has continued to decrease thanks to incentives and increased demand, making installation of solar an even smarter investment. Additionally, studies<sup>1</sup> have found that property values increase when solar is installed on homes, making it a savvy economic investment. Solar installation also reduces reliance on foreign sources of energy, making us more energy independent. As a result, rooftop solar customers are insulated from the price fluctuations normally faced by utility customers as well.

Unfortunately, many Ohioans are unable to take advantage of these benefits as they live in condominiums or planned communities that either prohibit or set unreasonable restrictions to prevent residents from installing solar on their own property. As a result, these Ohio property owners have been denied the opportunity to reduce and control their energy costs. SB 61 addresses this denial by stating: "[u]nless specifically prohibited in the declaration, any owner of a solar appropriate unit may install a solar energy collection device on the roof." The bill also preserves the rights of the condominium association or planned community to establish reasonable restrictions concerning the size, place, and manner of placement of solar panels on association members' properties (Sec. 5311.192).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Berkeley Lab Study on Home Values: <https://newscenter.lbl.gov/2015/11/12/premium-for-solar-homes/> & 2019 Zillow analysis of homes sold: <https://www.zillow.com/research/solar-panels-house-sell-more-23798/>



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In conclusion, SB 61 represents a bipartisan effort to remove market restrictions and expand access to renewable energy. Importantly, the legislation strikes a balance between condominium associations' and planned communities' governing regulations and residents' rights to place clean energy on their properties.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Pete Bucher at [pbucher@theoec.org](mailto:pbucher@theoec.org).

Sincerely,

Trish Demeter  
Interim President, OEC Action Fund