

State Representative

House District 1
Wayne County



Committees

Rules & Reference - Chairman
Ways & Means
Public Utilities
Ohio Constitutional Modernization -
Co-Chairman

Ron Amstutz
Speaker Pro Tempore

House Public Utilities Committee
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
House Bill 554
State Representative Ron Amstutz

Chairman Dovilla, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Minority Member Ashford and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to introduce you to House Bill 554.

The bill before you is intended to begin an earnest discussion, leading to policy action on how our state addresses a thicket of policy issues that surround our current halt in place on mandates concerning renewables, efficiency and peaking reductions— a halt that was put in place while we took a closer look at the policies — a two year halt that is scheduled to expire on December 31st of this year.

I had the opportunity to serve on the study committee, which came forward with a set of recommendations. This bill proposes to implement the first and foremost recommendation of that report.

It essentially mirrors the report's number one recommendation by instituting a continuing halt of indeterminate length to otherwise become a returning to escalating mandates less than seven months from now.

The primary reason for us moving in this direction is the uncertainty concerning the interaction with the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA's) efforts to impose a Clean Power Plan. There are multiple levels of uncertainty.

First, there is the real issue of whether the federal government has authority to govern our state electricity policy. Ohio is challenging this in a lawsuit with 14 other states.

Second, should the federal question eventually fall in their favor – and perhaps even more on point to this bill – there is a real question as to what, if any, credit Ohio could receive under the mandates of the federal Clean Power Plan from the policy mandates in our law from Senate Bill 221, which became effective in 2008.

Examples of some of these uncertainties from the Senate Bill 310 Study Committee's report of last September include:

- Will the U.S. EPA allow credit for improvements already in place?
- How will advanced energy and qualifying technologies be determined?
- Will renewable energy credit be recognized from out-of-state sources? And, if so, how?

With these and other questions in mind it makes sense to prevent escalating charges on electricity bills to Ohioans both at home and at their places of work from mandate language sitting in state law awaiting the study committee's recommendations and our action, as proposed here. You will see that language starting at line 72 of this bill.

As I indicated, this is a starting point for policy discussion and prompt action on this matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring the bill before you. I'll be happy to field questions on the bill if you have them.