

Good Afternoon Chairman Dovilla, Voce Chairwoman Roegner, Ranking Member Ashford, and Members of the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to testify in opposition to House Bill 554.

I am Sheryl Grant Billman, a woman farmer, partner and co-owner of Aggie's Rest Farm, a sustainable living farm near Grafton, Ohio, 22 miles southwest of Cleveland. Because agriculture currently uses 1/5 of the petroleum of the USA, at the farm, we are planting perennial protein and perennial foods to eliminate tilling and annual planting. Our goal is to be petroleum free by 2020. 87% of our population want renewable energy. We are addressing that issue.

My partner and co-owner of the farm is a retired USAF Veteran. He couldn't take off from work to be here as so many others like him—personal calls are also frowned on—and cell phone service in the country is sketchy at best.

He asked me to speak for him: "We rely on our elected officials whose salaries we pay, and their tax payer funded staff to research and do the best for the people they represent—who want renewable energy—and the jobs it represents for now and the future. People feel like they aren't being listened to and are tired of it. Ohio was set to be a leader in the solar energy movement, now Germany, Denmark, China and other foreign countries have taken the leadership and the lead."

"Fossil fuels jobs move as soon as the well or mine gives out. The jobs in Appalachia aren't coming back. They're going West." He also said, " Mobil, the Rockefeller Foundation, and BP are shifting investments to renewables." His words, and he was very displeased.

The grid is sadly in need of updating to be dependable, serious pipeline problems are occurring weekly. There are jobs to be had in clean up and removal of old pipelines—by people who know how to do the work safely along with solar and wind energy production jobs. We need to be doing this before we have to do it—and that is where we need to be spending our energy tax dollars—just get it done now. By the way, I just became a certified photovoltaic installer and my partner has been for two years now. We know many people preparing to take the plunge....to vote with their dollars and ballots. My friends with money took my advice 4 years ago, and divested themselves of fossil fuel holdings. They are so glad they did. We have to work with utility companies to make this shift—we are all in this together—some of us, however have not had a say, ever, in how our energy was gotten or delivered. The time is now for that to occur. Keeping the tier of increasing percentages of renewables in the mix of energy delivery needs to be adhered to in order to power a future we can all live with, safely, and comfortably. Imagine that, good jobs with good benefits... I appreciate your time and consideration today. I welcome any questions the committee may have.