

**Testimony of Rev. Craig A. Foster, P.E.
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Principle of Energility LLC
Opposition Testimony for Ohio House Bill 554
Nov. 29, 2016**

Dear Chairman Dovilla, Vice Chairwoman Roegner, Ranking Member Ashford, and Members of the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee

I write to you today to oppose this legislation from a unique position. I am a member of the clergy, serving as Deacon at St. John's Episcopal Church here in Columbus. I am also a registered professional engineer in the state of Ohio with nearly 40 years experience in the field of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewables in the commercial building and industrial sector. My company Energility LLC serves as the technical consultant for Ohio Interfaith Power and Light (www.ohipl.org). OhIPL is the state chapter of a national interfaith organization dedicated to addressing climate change in the faith community by encouraging energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the use renewables by focusing on tangible action.

I would like to approach this bill from both a moral standpoint and from the standpoint of an engineer who knows and works with one of the larger commercial utility user groups in the state, our houses of worship.

As you may know, 80% of Ohioans profess a faith in God. This means a majority of the electorate who votes also profess faith. And, every major religion, be it Jewish or Buddhist, Christian or Moslem, B'hai or Unitarian or Native American, profess an imperative to protect creation as it has been given to us.

I have included below an expansive list of statements made by the majority of religious organizations calling us to address climate change not only in this country but throughout the world. I believe all of you in the committee profess a religion in your public disclosures so I invite you to study what your faith community has to say about addressing this issue.

(A summary of many religious statements on climate change <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/religious-statements-on-climate-change/> and the Ohio Council of Churches <http://meec.udayton.edu/Publications/Earth%20Stewardship%20Policy%20Statement.pdf>)

I concede it will take more than the energy policies of the state of Ohio to address the climate change problem. What these statements from the faith community say is that we all have to do our part.

As you know the energy world is in a huge transition, and clean energy is happening

- There are 100,000 Ohioans working in the clean energy sector, and we're
- first in the Midwest for clean energy manufacturing jobs.
- We are still the #1 state for wind-energy supply chain companies - over 82 companies in Ohio make some piece or part of wind turbines.
- Cost of solar down 48% since 2010
- Over ½ wind energy projects last year were due to interest and investment from big companies like Google, Amazon, General Motors, etc. - not utilities
- And in about 5 years' time, Ohio's electricity portfolio has grown in diversity - going from a state that generates roughly 70% of its electricity from coal-fired power plants, to now just under 60%.

The moral imperative calls for you to allow the freeze to expire and allow Ohio to continue to lead in this sector.

As an engineer and technical consultant for OhIPL, I manage our Energy Stewards program. The Energy Stewards program first provides a platform for houses of worship to benchmark their utility use, learn how to form Green Teams to gain congregational involvement, and take tangible action within the congregation, in their homes, and in their places of work. Secondly, through our energy audit program, we assist houses of worship in obtaining high quality energy audits, obtaining rebate funds for engineering grade audits and assist in implementation of Energy Conservation Measures with rebates and loans.

Since the program started in 2011, 57 energy audits have been completed for the religious community in the state of Ohio. These audits have generated \$155,000 of revenue for local engineering firms. Eighteen of these houses of worship have initiated tangible action and have completed or are in the process of implementing some or all of the Energy Conservation Measures or ECMs recommended in their audits. The implementation cost of these ECMs is \$1,466,000, and all participants are using local contractors in Athens, in Mansfield, in Bowling Green, in Toledo, in Cincinnati and in Columbus. The audits for these projects would not have gone forward without the \$28,000 in rebates provided by electric utilities. And the 1.5 Million dollar cost was reduced for these houses of worship by over \$400,000 of combined utility rebates.

The annual utility cost savings from these projects is \$142,500 per year. We estimate there are 12,000 houses of worship within the state. Imagine the impact this program can have as we spread the word of the project successes. If 20% of the houses of worship participate, that would give participants an energy cost savings of \$17 million per year. That's \$17 million per year these congregations can put toward their ministries and programs rather than utility costs. This potential will not be realized if we continue the freeze as SB 320 will do.

In addition to the impact of the efforts of Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, our firm, Energility, LLC has been able to go from one part time employee in 2010 to nearly three full time equivalent employees by working in this industry. Perhaps I can say there are 100,003 in the clean energy industry in Ohio.

There are real, tangible benefits to bringing these standards back and as OhIPL continues to focus much of our efforts in low income and diverse communities, these are important advantages:

- In 2017 alone the improvement we'd see in air quality due to less reliance on coal fired power would result in avoidance of 2230 asthma attacks, 120 Emergency room visits, 230 heart attacks and over 16,000 lost work and school days. (44K asthma attacks over the long term)
- Consumer benefits = lower electric bills (\$4billion between 2009-2014)

SB 320 takes Ohio down the wrong path:

- Any extension of the freeze perpetuates uncertainty here in Ohio around private investment, the role of utilities in helping customers save money through energy efficiency, and continuing to grow this sector of our economy.
- The other provisions in this bill - for example, expanding definitions of what can count as a renewable technology or efficiency measure - are replays of failed proposals we've seen before. As an engineer, I was amazed to read that the bill allows Renewable Energy Source to include combustion sources such as coal and other fossil fuels if pollution controls are in place. Since the Oxford Dictionary defines "renewable" as "A natural resource or source of energy that is not depleted by use, such as water, wind, or solar power", my intelligence is truly insulted by such a provision.
- And finally, SB 320 would put Ohio even further behind other states in terms of private investment, cleaner air and innovation.

I hope and pray that you will keep in mind the energy savings already in place that can benefit voters who are members of the 12,000 houses of worship in Ohio SB 320 will eliminate their advantage and opportunity to make a better and more energy efficient Ohio for generations to come. Thank you for your attention to this plea and I am willing to answer any questions at this time.