



**Ohio Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**Thursday, December 8th, 2016**  
**Opponent Testimony to Am. Sub. HB 554**  
**Marnie Urso, Senior Program Manager**

Chairman Balderson, Ranking Minority Member Gentile, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am Marnie Urso, the Senior Program Manager for the National Audubon Society here in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in opposition to Am. Sub. HB 554.

Ohio's clean energy standards had been delivering significant net benefits to consumers since they were first enacted in 2008, and would have continued to do so had they not been frozen by SB 310 in the 130<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Benefits of these clean energy standards range from increased investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, improvements in public health, job growth, and pollution reduction for Ohio's natural areas that provide critical habitats to the birds and wildlife so important to so many.

The National Audubon Society supports the full reinstatement of Ohio's clean energy and energy efficiency standards. We will oppose alternative legislative proposals that would reduce the renewable energy and energy efficiency benchmarks or replace the standards with unenforceable, voluntary goals for the next three years. These proposals are hasty attempts to craft a statewide clean energy plan prior to the expiration of the current freeze at the end of the year rather than a substantive conversation about how best to chart a clean energy future for Ohio.

The National Audubon Society supports renewable energy, including wind energy, that is properly sited and managed to address potential wildlife impacts. Ohio's birds and wildlife depend on the habitats and food sources provided by our natural areas. Reducing emissions through clean energy and energy efficiency helps protect critical for the state's wide variety of species and mitigates climate change which Audubon deems the largest threat to birds.

In fact, Audubon scientists have reported that climate change threatens the survival of half the bird species in the continental United States and Canada. That is why Audubon continues working with its partners to reduce emissions and conserve the habitats most critical to building a bridge to the future for birds and other wildlife.

A newly released report titled *Cleaner Air and Better Health: The Benefits of Ohio's Renewable and Efficiency Standards*, found that resuming Ohio's clean energy standards in 2017 would have significant benefits for public health as well as wildlife conservation. Should the standards be fully reinstated in 2017, it would prevent at least 16,900 lost work days, 2,230 asthma attacks, 100 hospital admissions, 230 heart attacks, and at least 140 premature deaths - all just in the first year. Further, the report found that the clean energy standards will reduce Ohio's annual carbon pollution - a greenhouse gas that is a primary culprit for climate change - by about 10 million tons between 2017 and 2029. This is equal to avoiding emissions from the electricity consumed by 1 million homes over the course of an entire year.

Energy efficiency and renewable energy are vital components to protecting Ohio's birds and wildlife from the threat of climate change. The National Audubon Society urges members of the General Assembly to take this opportunity to lead on energy policy, not put the state in reverse. We urge you to defeat or take no action on Am. Sub. HB 554 or other alternative proposals that would block the reinstatement of Ohio's renewable energy and energy efficiency standards and leave our communities and wildlife unprotected.

*The National Audubon Society's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. The Audubon Society is working to protect the 314 bird species in North America whose future is threatened by climate change.*

Learn more at [www.Audubon.org/ohio-climate](http://www.Audubon.org/ohio-climate)