



Ohio Citizen Action

The premier grassroots mobilization team in Ohio and the Midwest

Before the Ohio House
Public Utilities Committee
Representative Bill Seitz, Chair
Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Hearing on H.B. 114

Testimony of
Rachael Belz, Executive Director
Ohio Citizen Action

Ohioans want clean energy

Chairman Seitz, Vice Chair Carfagna, Ranking Member Ashford and members of the Committee:

I write today on behalf of more than 30,000 dues paying members of Ohio Citizen Action, to urge you to abandon this latest attempt to repeal Ohio's renewable energy and energy efficiency portfolio standards. Based on our experience, this bill is badly out of step with what most Ohioans want.

I refer you to a 2014 Ohio Advanced Energy Economy Poll that found 72% of the 600 people polled supported the same moderate, mandatory standards that are once more in effect in this state. There's also a Public Opinion Strategies poll of 400 registered Ohio Republican and independent voters, which also found 72% would advise Republican candidates to support energy efficiency and renewable energy policies. Perhaps you think the sample size of these polls insufficient to represent a statistically significant sample. Let me then relate to you a story of our own poll, administered over eight weeks last summer, in a single house district, chosen because it was a predominantly "red" district in a predominantly "blue" county.

I refer to HD16, represented then by Rep. Nan Baker. Our staff knocked on 1,836 doors and phoned 1,565 other people in the district for a total of 3,401 people contacted. We asked those people, "On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being most likely, how likely are you to consider clean energy when voting?" We did not use walk lists of any kind. We knocked on every door, just as we do every week night all over Ohio. You know what we found?

First, we found that 96% of the people contacted were registered voters. Next, we found that of the registered voters, 70% scored themselves as “very likely” or “moderately likely” to consider clean energy when voting.

Ohio families have made the connection between burning coal for electricity and asthma and other health problems. They have noted how coal ash spills in other states have contaminated drinking water. They’ve looked with pride upon wind farms and solar arrays cropping up in our state. They understand that employers like Amazon and Whirlpool care about clean energy. In short, they know that coal’s days are numbered and states that embrace the transition to cleaner, renewable energy sooner will be winners in the long run.

That’s why last year, more than 20,000 Ohioans signed a petition circulated by us door-to-door, urging Governor Kasich to allow the freeze on Ohio’s mandatory renewable energy and energy efficiency standards to end. At least 10,541 people wrote personal letters to end the freeze as well. I say “at least”, because we only collected that number at people’s doors and estimate others were sent besides.

As much as they did not support the freeze, we are relatively certain Ohio voters also would not support a de-facto repeal, which is what H.B. 114 represents. Provisions like the all customer opt-out, making standards voluntary, removing consequences for utilities failing to meet benchmarks and expanding the definition of efficiency into relative meaningless are thinly veiled attempts to repeal without repealing. Ohio voters will not be fooled. They know what they want and they will pay attention to who does or does not give it to them.