

**House Public Utilities Committee
Opponent Testimony
House Bill 114**

**Josh Knights, The Nature Conservancy in Ohio
March 21, 2017**

Chairman Seitz, Vice Chair Carfagna, Ranking Member Ashford, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, I am Josh Knights, the State Director for The Nature Conservancy in Ohio. We respectfully submit this written testimony in opposition to HB 114.

The Nature Conservancy is a non-partisan, science-based organization that seeks to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work collaboratively with businesses, farmers, sportsmen groups, government and local communities to develop pragmatic, market-based solutions to conservation challenges, including air pollution. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters.

As you know, Ohio's clean energy standards were paused in 2014. The intent of the pause was to provide time for a review of the standards in light of the changes in energy markets since the standards were originally established in 2008. In our meetings with the Governor's office and members of the General Assembly, we heard genuine interest in recommendations on how to modify the standards to reflect current market and policy factors.

Because the energy mandates study committee considered only the costs of the standards and failed to take into account the benefits to the state's economy, The Nature Conservancy and EDF commissioned a comprehensive energy report to provide data-driven objective information. "Grounds for Optimism: Options for Empowering Ohio's Energy Market" was released on October 24, 2016.

Our report was produced by the energy market experts at the Greenlink Group in consultation with Runnerstone, an Ohio energy consultancy well-versed in the state's energy landscape. The report compares three scenarios with varying, but achievable, levels of renewable energy and energy efficiency to determine how best to maximize financial benefits for the state. The three scenarios were compared against an indefinite pause of the standards. Depending on which of the scenarios chosen, the report forecasts for Ohio:

- Addition of 82,300 to 136,000 new jobs
- Increased payroll between \$4.6 billion and \$7.6 billion by 2030.
- GDP enhanced by \$6.7 billion to \$10.7 billion

- Health-care costs reduced between \$800 million in the near term, increasing to \$3 billion a year by 2030.
- A \$28.8 million to \$50.9 million savings to consumers by 2030.

By including benefits with the costs and looking at factors beyond simply the cost of electricity, our analysis gets closer to the true costs and benefits of the clean energy standards than the findings of the energy mandates study committee. As we are currently experiencing, investment is more likely to happen if Ohio has a standard than if we rely on voluntary action. The market likes data-driven decisions and predictability, and our current on-again/off-again energy policy does not provide either of those signals.

Ohio has the potential to be a clean energy leader. We do not want to hang a “closed for business” sign on our borders. Our report finds that there are reasonable options for attracting new investments to the state, creating jobs, and providing Ohioans with a cleaner, more affordable energy system. By making the standards voluntary in perpetuity, HB 114 would undercut an industry that is creating jobs, expanding tax rolls and reducing pollution.

For these reasons, The Nature Conservancy strongly opposes HB 114.

Josh Knights
Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy in Ohio
6375 Riverside Drive, Suite 100
Dublin, OH 43017
Phone: 614-717-2770
Email: jknights@tnc.org