

Ohio Chapter of Sierra Club
Opponent Testimony - Sub. House Bill 114
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
Adam Rissien, June, 20 2018

Chairman Balderson, Vice-Chair Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee. My name is Adam Rissien representing the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Ohio Beyond Coal Campaign. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to substitute House Bill 114 for reasons detailed in the our previous testimonies (attached), and explained below.

Foremost, we oppose the notion that substitute HB 114 is in any way a compromise.

While we are pleased to see the Senate continue efforts to open Ohio for business once again when it comes to wind energy, this effort is merely a fix for the prohibitive wind turbine setback restrictions that were inserted in a 2014 budget bill that this same body approved. This is good policy but at its heart, it is a fix for a self-inflicted wound.

To be clear, correcting the wind setbacks should not come at the expense of Ohio's clean energy standards. Reducing the renewable energy standard to 8.5% moves Ohio backwards at a time when other states, like Michigan and Pennsylvania, have greater commitments to wind and solar power than Ohio. Lowering the energy efficiency standards and allowing huge numbers of businesses to forego them altogether, the mercantile opt-out, will cost Ohio consumers over \$1 billion in lost savings.

Substitute HB 114 is the latest effort to hold Ohio back from a clean energy future. First came SB 58 in 2013 that sought to significantly weaken the renewable portfolio standards, which fortunately did not move forward. However, next year came the "compromise" in SB 310, which halted Ohio's renewable energy and energy efficiency standards with a two-year freeze and undermined what counts as energy efficiency. At the same time, alterations in wind turbine setback distance requirements shut down new wind development. Next, came HB 554 that sought to extend the freeze through 2018, which Gov. Kasich vetoed in December, 2016. In this context, not only is substitute HB 114 a bill fixing a problem lawmakers created with the wind turbine setbacks, but it is also one that continues a trend geared towards weakening our clean energy standards.

This is hardly a compromise. It is instead a clear sign of a lack of direction and commitment when it comes to developing a coherent, stable, state energy policy.

The Sierra Club remains committed to Ohio's renewable portfolio and energy efficiency standards without further changes, and we support a clean fix to the wind turbine setback distances as proposed in SB 238. Such a correction should not come at the expense of our

Clean Energy standards. For this reason we urge the committee to vote against substitute HB 114.

Ohio Chapter of Sierra Club
Opponent Testimony - Sub. House Bill 114
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
Adam Rissien, January 10, 2018

Chairman Balderson, Vice-Chair Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee. My name is Adam Rissien representing the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Ohio Beyond Coal Campaign. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to House Bill 114 for reasons detailed in the our previous testimony (attached) presented to the House Public Utilities Committee on March 21, 2017.

Our concerns regarding HB 114 and opposition to the continuous efforts aimed at eroding Ohio's clean energy standards remain unchanged. The following points highlight our rationale:

- Ohioans want clean energy. Numerous polls have shown Ohioans support clean energy, including enforceable requirements that utilities provide clean energy solutions.
- Clean energy standards are good for customers. Before the freeze, Ohio's Energy Efficiency Resource Standard resulted in a \$500 million annual savings for Ohio customers according to the PUCO.
- Ohio's Clean Energy Standards have also been good for Ohio's workers and economy. Over 100,000 Ohioans work in the clean energy sector. While the standards were in place, investments in Ohio's clean energy sector generated over \$160 million in annual GDP growth and created thousands of new jobs.
- Keeping the original standards will utilize the market to spur growth in clean energy, just as we saw when they were in place before the freeze.
 - Ohio utility companies are fighting to hold onto outdated and uncompetitive power generation. The clean energy standards help level the playing field, and spurs investments that will boost Ohio's economy.
- Without clean energy standards, Ohio is being left behind.
 - Wind and solar energy have increased their market share to 7% of US electricity supply .

- In 2016 global capacity for renewable energy surpassed that of coal for the first time ever.
- Other states and countries are moving forward on clean energy. The Michigan Senate moved forward on adopting a 15% renewable portfolio standard to be met by 2022 and eight other states are currently generating 15%-31% of their power from wind energy alone.

For these reasons and those in the attached document, we urge the committee to vote against HB 114 in any form, and allow our Clean Energy Standards to provide their proven benefits for Ohioans and our environment. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.



**Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
Opponent Testimony
HB 114**

**Kristen Kubitza, Sierra Club
March 21, 2017**

Chairman Seitz, Vice Chair Carfagna, Ranking Minority Member Ashford, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to HB 114. My name is Kristen Kubitza and I am the Energy Program Coordinator with the Ohio Chapter of Sierra Club. Sierra Club represents the interests of over 20,000 paying members and over 150,000 supporters across Ohio. These Ohioans have been engaged in energy efficiency and renewable energy activities since the passage of SB 221, offering thousands of comments to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (“PUCO”), speaking publicly at community hearings and offering their support anywhere they can. To serve their interests, we have been very active participants at the PUCO working to ensure the greatest value is derived from these energy efficiency and alternative energy investments. Our members and supporters are following this legislative process very closely as well. While in effect Ohio’s Clean Energy Standards were successful, reducing air pollution, saving customers money, growing Ohio’s economy, and protecting public health.

Ohioans Across the Board Support Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policies

It is clear that Ohioans want clean energy. Numerous polls have documented Ohioans support for clean energy, including enforceable requirements that utilities provide clean energy solutions. A poll conducted this September by University of Maryland found that 68% of Ohioans support a requirement that utilities generate a portion of their electricity through renewable energy sources¹. Furthermore, a poll conducted by the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum found that 82% of Ohio conservative voters want the state to continue requiring electric utilities to provide energy efficiency programs that help customers reduce their monthly bills². That same poll also found that 72% would advise candidates for public office to support energy efficiency and

¹ http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EE_Report.pdf

²

http://media.cleveland.com/business_impact/other/Ohio%20Energy%20Center%20Right%20polling%20results.pdf

renewable energy policies. Ohioans recognize that clean energy benefits more than just the environment. Clean energy reduces utility costs to customers, creates jobs and boosts Ohio's economy, and improves public health.

Ohio's Clean Energy Standards are Good for Customers

Ohio's Energy Efficiency Resource Standard resulted in significant customer savings prior to being "frozen" in 2014. According to annual reports submitted by utilities to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), Ohio customers saved \$500 million annually³. Furthermore, analysis shows that between 2009-2014 for every \$1 spent on energy efficiency programs in Ohio, residents and businesses gained \$1.90 in benefits⁴. Energy efficiency programs provide important opportunities for customers to exert control over their energy use and reduce their bills.

Prior to being frozen, the law required that utility energy efficiency programs be designed to save more money for customers than they cost (as evaluated by the total resource standard). To ensure that the programs did indeed result in customer savings, the law required that utilities submit their energy efficiency program proposal to the PUCO for review and approval. In an efficiency portfolio filing in 2014, FirstEnergy explains in great detail how its programs meet cost-effectiveness thresholds, even when considering mercantile customers, stating: "Collectively, the proposed programs provide *significant opportunities for energy and cost savings for virtually all of the Companies' customers* and provide the Companies with the best opportunity to meet or exceed their ... requirements *in a cost effective manner.*" The PUCO reviewed and approved FirstEnergy's proposal noting the significant benefits that customers stand to realize from these investments. Similar support for efficiency can be found in the Duke, Dayton Power and Light, and AEP filings. AEP previously showed that energy efficiency will cost barely over a penny per kwh for the next five years, the cheapest supply option for its customers.

Economic Benefits to Ohio

Ohio's Clean Energy Standards have also been good for Ohio's workers and economy. Over 100,000 Ohioans work in the clean energy sector⁵. Ohio is first in the Midwest for clean energy manufacturing jobs and first in the nation for wind-energy supply chain companies⁶. While the Clean Energy Standards were in place, investments in Ohio's clean energy sector generated over \$160 million in annual GDP growth and created thousands of new jobs⁷. Ohio has a real opportunity to grow our economy by investing in clean energy. Market trends are increasingly

³ <http://www.cleanjobsmidwest.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CJM-Full-Story-Final-1.pdf>

⁴ The Cadmus Group, Inc. The Economic Impacts of Energy Efficiency Investments in Ohio. October 2016.

⁵ <http://www.cleanjobsmidwest.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CJM-Full-Story-Final-1.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.cleanjobsmidwest.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CJM-Full-Story-Final-1.pdf>

⁷ http://www.ohiomfg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013-11-22_lb_energy_deeps_nov_13_final.pdf

moving towards clean energy. In 2014 Ohio's Clean Energy Standards required 2.5% of Ohio's electricity to come from renewables. Yet the total cost of meeting the standard was less than it was in 2011 when the Standard required only 1%. Wind and solar energy have also increased their market share to 7% of US electricity supply⁸. Furthermore, last year global capacity for renewable energy surpassed that of coal for the first time ever⁹. Other states and countries are moving forward on clean energy. In fact, earlier this month the Michigan Senate moved forward on adopting a 15% renewable portfolio standard to be met by 2022¹⁰. And Michigan is not alone, eight other states are currently generating 15%-31% of their power from wind energy alone¹¹. Meanwhile, Ohio is being left behind and stands to miss out on significant opportunities for economic growth. Extending the freeze on Ohio's Clean Energy Standards, as proposed in HB 114, also extends the uncertainty around Ohio's energy future and thereby deters economic investment by private business. HB 114 seeks to keep Ohio in the past and ignore market trends.

Ohio's Clean Energy Standards Create Significant Public Health Benefits

Furthermore, Ohio's Clean Energy Standards offer significant benefits to public health. By diversifying Ohio's energy portfolio, the Standards result in improved air quality from decreased pollution. In fact, during the first two years the Standards were in place Ohio saw a reduction of 2.2 million tons of carbon pollution¹². Bringing back Ohio's Clean Energy Standards in 2017 would have significant measurable impacts. A 2015 report documented that allowing the Standards to come back would result in preventing approximately 2,230 asthma attacks, 120 emergency room visits, 230 heart attacks and over 16,000 lost work and school days in one year. The benefits incurred by 2027 include preventing over 44,000 asthma attacks, over 4,000 heart attacks, and nearly 3,000 premature deaths among other health benefits¹³. Additionally, by reducing our carbon pollution Ohio helps mitigate climate change impacts which are already having significant impacts here at home. Ohio has seen a 50% increase in the frequency of extreme rainfall over the last 50 years. Increased rainfall has had detrimental effects on Ohio's waterways, resulting in increased toxic algal blooms which threaten public drinking water supplies¹⁴.

⁸ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/clean-up-energy-reap-benefits-ib.pdf>

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<https://www.iea.org/newsroom/news/2016/october/iea-raises-its-five-year-renewable-growth-forecast-as-2015-mark-s-record-year.html>

¹⁰ The legislation is expected to pass the Michigan House, and receive final approval by Governor Rick Snyder http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/11/senate_passes_energy_overhaul.html

¹¹ <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=28512>

¹² <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/cleaner-air-and-better-health-benefits-ohios-renewable-and-efficiency-standards>

¹³ <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/cleaner-air-and-better-health-benefits-ohios-renewable-and-efficiency-standards>

¹⁴ <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/cleaner-air-and-better-health-benefits-ohios-renewable-and-efficiency-standards>

Conclusion

Ohio's Clean Energy Standards have a proven track record of delivering benefits to the environment, customers, Ohio's economy, and public health. In addition, the market is increasingly moving toward clean energy. Ohio has a choice to make. We can be a leader, investing in clean energy and taking full advantage of the burgeoning economic development opportunities, or we can be left behind. It is in Ohio's best interest to let the "freeze" to thaw and reinstate the Clean Energy Standards in 2017. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony today on HB 114. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

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