



## CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD OF OHIO

### Proponent Testimony of Tom Bullock on Ohio Senate Bill 346 Executive Director, Citizens Utility Board of Ohio Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee November 10, 2020

Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 346 (S.B. 346). My name is Tom Bullock, and I am executive director of the Citizens Utility Board of Ohio (CUB Ohio).

CUB Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan consumer watchdog that advocates for residential and small business utility customers. Our mission is to educate consumers to reduce their utility bills as well as to work for transparency and for energy that is affordable, reliable, and clean. Our membership lives across the state and is growing rapidly.

S.B. 346 would repeal H.B. 6 to restore previous law out of recognition that its genesis was negatively affected by the alleged bribery and racketeering scheme described in the U.S. Attorney's indictment of former Ohio Speaker Larry Householder. As Governor DeWine has said of H.B. 6, "it needs to be repealed. It is a unique law that is forever tainted by how we created it. The process, looking back, is clearly tainted and we have to start over."

S.B. 346 can provide the General Assembly a new opportunity to go where H.B. 6 was unsuccessful: to support the efficient use of power and to create new opportunities for Ohio-based more zero-carbon generation. Both of these can help to lower costs for Ohio consumers.

Some ideas on how to achieve this:

- Energy efficiency is our cheapest and cleanest resource. We should use it first and use it more. Helpful steps could include:
  - Requiring each Electric Distribution Utility (EDU) with at least 25 percent advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) to establish a residential peak demand management distribution tariff consistent with PJM's Peak Shaving Adjustment program or other applicable PJM demand-side resource program, along with funding for consumer education regarding the program; with bill reductions from program to be applied to both shopping and non-shopping customers. Also require an opt-in hourly pricing option.
  - Lowering consumer costs long-term by investing in efficiency programs for residential and small business customers to provide them with a framework for making smart energy choices, establishing a triennial process for proposal and review of voluntary utility programs with PUCO determining cost caps and selecting third-parties to audit them. Cut monthly charges by half or more by amortizing costs over the life of investments. Limit any utility incentives for cost-effective delivery of customer energy savings to 5 percent of overall costs and require them to be proportional to net customer savings.
  - There are also opportunities, as Ohio plans for expanded electric vehicle (EV) use, to support management of peak demand from electric vehicles to maximize system

benefit (by establishing policy in R.C. 4928.02); for example by requiring each EDU to establish an EV load management tariff along with funding for customer education regarding the program.

- CUB Ohio is for the consumer, and we want the cheapest and fastest way to get to clean energy. Helpful steps could include:
  - Allowing limited virtual net metering (enabling community solar) so customers could purchase a share of a renewable system not located on their own roof and be on a net metering rate for that system (with guaranteed purchase of unsold energy/RECs by the utility at a floor price).
  - Requiring third party data access for any utility with AMI with rules to protect privacy (such as those in Illinois).

These are merely a few ideas that we would be happy to expand upon. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 346.