



OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

State Representative Jay Edwards

House Bill 685 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Stephens, Vice-Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Thank you for allowing me and Representative Cross to testify of H.B. 685, The “Energize Ohio” Bill.

As Representative Cross mentioned this bill is designed to address communities that are negatively affected by economic growth because of the lack of natural gas infrastructure in those communities. We feel this bill addresses these issues to help with economic growth in these communities as well as address funding concerns given the fact that this type of infrastructure is expensive to construct.

Two quick things I wanted to point out have to do with the bond programs in this bill. First, it allows the Director of Development to request that the Treasurer of State issue bonds designed for economic development to fund natural gas and infrastructure programs in the designated “ENERGIZE Ohio Zones”. This will allow the Director to use the bond proceeds deposited in the Natural Gas Infrastructure Fund to provide loans to the natural gas companies that are engaging in these projects. All the money that will be received as repayment of the loans, including the interest, will be deposited back into the fund.

Second, the Bill also creates a reserve account within the current law’s Facilities Establishment Fund. The money in this account will initially be used as credit enhancement for the bonds issued under the program. In other words, the money will serve as a guarantee for repayment of the bonds which makes it more attractive to investors. It appropriates \$50 million to this account from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund, which holds revenue the state received from ARPA.

With that, we hope you join us in supporting this Bill as me and Representative Cross would be happy to answer any questions.