



Testimony Before the Ohio Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee

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Chairman McColley, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 201.

My name is Matthew Hammond, President of the Ohio Oil & Gas Association. Founded in 1947, OOGA is a statewide trade association, today serving about 1,300 members. This includes both small, independent conventional producers and large independent horizontal operators exploring Ohio's shale play. Our membership also consists of midstream companies, large-scale transmission line companies, contractors, oilfield service and supply providers, manufacturers, gas utilities and various other professional entities.

House Bill 201 guarantees that every Ohio household and business has the right to obtain service from a capable natural gas supplier certified to provide it in that given location. To be clear, this bill quite clearly does not mandate that any Ohioan use natural gas as their home energy source. Nor does it limit any Ohioan's ability to acquire energy service from any number of other energy sources traditionally known as renewable.

This bill simply does not grant a township, county or municipality the authority to step in and prohibit Ohio households and families from utilizing natural gas if they choose to do so. This, in turn, will keep Ohio from becoming a hodge-podge of local ordinances where one community has access to natural gas and another, just a short distance away, does not.

With natural gas, political subdivisions are not forced to choose between energy that is "clean" and energy that is "dirty." Energy industry efforts to curb emissions, has helped bring combined methane emissions from petroleum and natural gas systems down 23.2 percent from their 1990 levels. A 2020 report by the US EPA found that methane emissions in the United States were 18 percent lower than 1990 levels. Additionally, US energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions decreased in 2019 by 2.8%, or 150 million metric tons (MMmt) when compared with 2018.

Additionally, Ohio power sector carbon emissions declined 37.7 percent from 2005 to 2015, reductions that took place while natural gas-fired electricity generation has increased 940 percent. In 2018, the Environmental Defense Fund labeled Ohio as the "nation's carbon-reducing powerhouse," which they credited to the state's "dramatic increase in natural gas-fired electricity generation."

Methane emissions in the United States continue to decline, according to updated data released in the Environmental Protection Agency's final 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The GHGI data show U.S. methane emissions were 18 percent lower than in 1990 and 10 percent below 2005 levels.

Finally, prohibiting natural gas for heating homes and operating appliances will have a negative impact on Ohio families financially by completely taking away an energy source that, thanks to the shale boom over the past decade, is abundant and affordable. A Bureau of Labor Statistics study indicated that natural gas prices for the average American household were \$429 lower in 2018 than in 2008.

The decision by certain political subdivisions to ban natural gas is an effort that will prove harmful to Ohio families and local businesses. The natural gas and oil industry has also invested billions of dollars and created 208,000 thousand jobs in Ohio. In fact, there are currently 12 natural gas fired power plants being permitted, under construction or operating in Ohio, with an investment of over \$10 billion, creating more 6,700 construction jobs with the ability to power more than 9 million homes. Without producers exploring for and producing natural gas in Ohio, it is highly likely independent power producers would not be making these investments.

In conclusion, the passage and adoption of House Bill 201 will be beneficial for both the environment and consumers, ensuring Ohioans continue to have access to abundant, affordable and clean energy. Therefore, on behalf of our roughly 1,300 members, the Ohio Oil & Gas Association proudly offers its full support behind this legislation.

Again, thank you to the committee for providing me the opportunity to offer testimony today.