



**Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
Supporter Testimony House Bill 79
Molly Nichols - Sierra Club**

Tuesday April 25, 2023

Dear Chairman Stein, Vice Chairwoman Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee,

My name is Molly Nichols, and I am the Organizing Representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign here in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 79.

Ohioans will greatly benefit from utility programs to reduce energy waste. Not only are these programs a direct benefit to consumers—for every \$1 spent on energy efficiency, over \$2 is saved on customers' electric bills—they also reduce the amount of energy that needs to be produced. This reduces the load on our grid and helps address the climate crisis. These energy savings benefit Ohio's environment and economy, and we've been missing out on those benefits since the passage of HB6 in 2019. The bill eliminated energy efficiency programs, and since then, the PUCO has not approved any programs proposed by utilities.

The Sierra Club strongly supports efforts to reduce energy waste, and we have praised Ohio's previous commitment to energy efficiency that was part of the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) and goals. While we continue to call for the full repeal of HB6 and the reimplementation and strengthening of the EERS, HB79 is good legislation that will allow Ohio utilities to once again begin offering programs to reduce energy waste to customers.

We know utility energy efficiency programs work. Numerous studies have demonstrated this fact, along with filings at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) by Ohio's electric utilities. We similarly know Ohio's electric utilities can offer programs that are cost effective and popular. The passage of HB6, however, left it unclear on whether or not Ohio's utilities could offer the sort of popular, cost effective, and demonstrably effective programs that reduce energy waste. HB79 lays out a path for that to happen and provides the legislative clarity the PUCO needs.

The fact that HB79 is supported by such a wide swath of groups and interests demonstrates the programs outlined within the bill are popular and that there is a demand. This sort of consensus is not common, especially on energy issues, and helps highlight why this committee, the House, and the Senate should move quickly to approve HB79 and send it to Gov DeWine for his signature.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony supporting HB79.

Sincerely,

Molly Nichols
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