



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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House Bill 79
Proponent Testimony
December 2, 2024
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
William Murdock, MORPC Executive Director

Chair Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 79. My name is William Murdock, and I serve as the Executive Director at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC).

MORPC is a regional planning organization and council representing 90 local governments and partner organizations across 15 counties in Central Ohio. Our members reflect the diversity of Ohio's communities—urban, suburban, and rural—representing a microcosm of the state. We deliver programs, services, and funding in transportation, land use, data, sustainability, and economic development.

Our staff work closely with our member communities to collaborate on sustainability solutions. This often entails broader conversations regarding energy production, land use, financing, microgeneration, and electric vehicle infrastructure. However, one significant part of our work – which may be too often overshadowed – is our home energy efficiency programming. At MORPC, we house a residential services department that provides free weatherization and energy efficiency resources to Franklin County residents in need. Our staff are on the front lines of this issue, providing home inspections, energy audits, and safety checks. We also connect our residents to contractors who can perform home repairs to keep residents comfortable and safe in their homes.

Energy costs can also have downstream effects that can exacerbate housing instability. In Central Ohio particularly, housing costs have rapidly risen in recent years, with household incomes struggling to keep pace. High energy bills resulting from inefficient appliances or poorly insulated homes can be the difference between staying in that home or being forced to relocate, or worse.


Simultaneously, extreme temperatures over the last few years have had tangible impacts during peak energy demand. Blackouts, brownouts, and increasing demand on the electric grid are not only inconvenient for residents, but can also pose potential health and safety risks. As Central Ohio continues to grow and bring in ambitious new developments, our residents and businesses need and deserve access to reliable, affordable energy.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Chris Amorose Groomes
Chair

Michelle Crandall
Vice Chair

Ben Kessler
Secretary



It is because of this wide variety of work that we know the impacts energy efficiency programming can have. These efforts save residents money, keep them housed in their existing communities, and keep them safe from environmental hazards. We applaud the Ohio House of Representatives, Representative Seitz and Representative Sweeney for advancing this bill to create one more tool in the toolbox to encourage energy efficiency across the state. These reforms will not only save beneficiaries of the program in the short run, but will benefit us all as reduced usage can bring prices down and reduce stress on our infrastructure.

Chair Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 79. I welcome any questions you may have about my testimony or MORPC's work. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at wmurdock@morpc.org.

