



Proponent Testimony HB 79
House Public Utilities Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
April 26, 2023

Chair Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit proponent testimony for HB 79. My name is Will Kuehnle. I am an associate director for the Catholic Conference of Ohio, which is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio thanks Representative Seitz and Representative Sweeney for introducing HB 79, and we support this legislation based on the Church’s teaching regarding our obligation to care for our common home and the need to practice responsible stewardship over natural resources.

In a 2015 letter on integral ecology, Pope Francis praises certain “good practices” of stewardship, including directing public policy with an eye toward “energy efficiency”. Previous Catholic Popes have also called on “technologically advanced societies” to “reduce energy consumption and improve its efficiency”. In light of their teaching, the Catholic Conference is glad to support HB 79.

Additionally, the Catholic Conference urges your support for this legislation given its preferential option for the poor. One of the key features of the teaching of the Catholic faith is that public policies should prioritize the needs of the vulnerable, and the provision of HB 79 that directs energy utility distribution portfolios to include a program for low-income households acknowledges this moral duty.

We ask that the state of Ohio lead the way in promoting energy efficiency, both as a model of financial prudence and as an act of care for creation with mindfulness of under-resourced Ohioans.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.