

## Testimony on HB 15

Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Ziewitz, PhD, 3786 Westwood Road, University Heights, OH 44118

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Honorable Committee Members:

I urge you to take the time to craft energy legislation that not only encourages good economic development for Ohio, but also protects citizens, businesses, and our environment. As currently proposed, HB 15 has serious shortcomings that do not create a brighter energy future for Ohio or help the pocketbooks of everyday citizens.

The proposed legislation offers little to improve our resilience to climate change and fails to buffer citizens from the hardships of higher electric bills that will ensue from the PJM Interconnection capacity auction. While several elements in HB 15 are good, the bulk of the legislation is deeply flawed.

It's a certainty that electric costs will go up for all Ohioans after last year's questionable actions by PJM Interconnection. And, we need to plan for rising demand for energy by data centers, manufacturing, and other intensive energy users. Ohio legislators have a chance to meet these challenges by crafting a **forward-thinking energy policy that softens the blow to consumers and encourages cleaner energy**. This bill fails on both counts.

At the worst, the legislation could encourage the hasty building of methane power plants in neighborhoods and communities that worsen problems with climate and detract from communities. Powering economic development in Ohio should take place with an emphasis on **clean energy** and **maximum energy efficiency**, not encouragement of a proliferation of fast-tracked methane mini-generation plants that have very short review times. Methane is a greenhouse gas that exacerbates climate change and takes a heavy toll on the environment during fracking; Ohio is already experiencing climate change impacts including extreme weather, droughts in some areas with flooding in others. Now is not the time to hastily encourage gas development and use.

**I respectfully ask you to consider making the following changes to the bill:**

\*Restore and enhance **energy efficiency programs** for citizens that were removed by the disastrous HB6. With expected price hikes of **10-15% for residential consumers** and more for commercial businesses, Ohio should enact programs including **free, high-quality energy audits and increased support for insulation and weatherization**. In my area, local officials estimate that only 10 percent of homes are adequately insulated, leading to higher energy bills, wasted energy, and more pollution. The money recaptured by **immediately ending the bailouts of coal plants** could be put to conservation programs.

\*Prioritize use of clean energy for supplying data centers. According to the US Department of Energy, "**Near-term data center driven electricity demand growth is an opportunity to accelerate the build out of clean energy solutions, improve demand flexibility, and modernize the grid while maintaining affordability**. Today, solar energy, land-based wind energy, battery

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**storage, and energy efficiency** are some of the most rapidly scalable and cost competitive ways to meet increased electricity demand from data centers. (<https://www.energy.gov/gdo/clean-energy-resources-meet-data-center-electricity-demand>.)

\*Require **best energy efficiency practices for data centers**.

\*Ensure thorough scrutiny of energy production applications and resist SB2's "**shot clock**" approach. Early in the review process, data center applicants should **disclose the amount and source of water they will use** to allow consideration on local water supply. Adequate time for public review and an environmental impact study are essential.

\*Restore the **750-foot setback for wind turbines**.

\*Add **Solar for Schools**.

\***Encourage development of solar and wind – clean energy – over gas**. The continued legal discrimination against clean energy will hurt Ohio in the long run. Wind and solar are more economical and can be deployed without negative impacts to our precious water supply. Ideally, legislation that allows local governments to veto wind and solar projects (but not gas, coal, or nuclear) should be repealed. **Or**, in the interest of local control and fairness, local veto power should extend to **all types** of energy projects.

Obtaining and using natural gas is hurting our water supply and creating volumes of polluted wastewater. Since 2010, the oil and gas industry has removed 4.69 billion gallons of water from the Ohio River Valley.

\***Do not exempt electric generation property from taxation**.

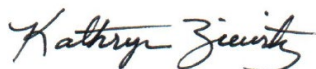
**Please retain the following positive elements of the bill:**

\*Immediately ending coal plant bailouts upon passage of the bill.

\*Keep the **Community Energy Pilot program**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Ziewitz