



OHIO CONSERVATIVE ENERGY FORUM

Proponent Testimony of Tyler Duvelius on Substitute House Bill 15 before the Ohio House Energy Committee

Chairman Holmes, Vice Chairman Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Glassburn, and Members of the House Energy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 15. My name is Tyler Duvelius, and I serve as a consultant to the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum. OHCEF's mission is to advocate for a commonsense, market-driven approach to energy policy that promotes economic growth, ensures reliability, and protects consumer choice. We appreciate the legislature's ongoing efforts to modernize Ohio's energy policies and support reinvestment in communities impacted by economic transitions.

We strongly support H.B. 15 and commend the bill sponsor, co-sponsors, and leadership for their work to strengthen Ohio's energy landscape. This landmark energy legislation updates public utility regulations, enhances transparency, facilitates economic redevelopment through priority investment areas, encourages advanced transmission technologies to alleviate growing worries regarding load growth, and unlocks community energy. These measures will ensure that Ohio remains a competitive and attractive place for energy infrastructure investment.

We are particularly encouraged by the bill's establishment of **priority investment areas** for brownfields and former coal mines. Providing tax exemptions and streamlining regulatory processes for these sites will attract private investment, revitalize local economies, and repurpose underutilized land. This pragmatic approach supports communities historically reliant on coal while advancing energy innovation.

Additionally, we support provisions ensuring **greater consumer protections** and **public utility accountability**. Refund requirements for unlawful charges, increased PUCO transparency, and restrictions on undisclosed utility settlements are vital steps to protect ratepayers and foster public trust.

Demand for power is growing across the country, threatening to strain the power grid. With new manufacturing facilities and data centers, Ohio is no exception to this worrisome trend. The **advanced transmission technology (ATT)** provisions in H.B. 15 are cost-effective measures that will ensure Ohio has a secure, reliable, and efficient power grid. These provisions represent a crucial first step toward much needed grid modernization and transmission reform.



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Lastly, OHCEF was also pleased to see **community energy** be included in the substitute bill for H.B. 15. Our organization views these provisions as a fitting addition as H.B. 15 is all about opening a free market. Community energy programs will give small businesses and individuals greater say from where they procure energy.

While we strongly support H.B. 15, we encourage this committee to continue its bold leadership and pursue legislation that will fully unlock the full potential of priority investment areas. We respectfully urge the committee to consider an exemption for **solar and wind energy projects** in these areas from the restrictions imposed by Senate Bill 52 this General Assembly.

S.B. 52 introduced additional local approval requirements that have slowed the development of solar and wind projects. While community input is vital, these restrictions create barriers to clean energy investment, particularly on brownfields and former coal mine sites.

By allowing solar and wind developments in priority investment areas to proceed without additional local referenda, Ohio can attract private investment, create jobs, and revitalize transitioning communities. Exempting solar and wind projects from S.B. 52 restrictions in these areas would:

- Encourage private investment and job creation in regions needing economic diversification.
- Maximize land-use flexibility, allowing former coal sites to be repurposed for productive use.
- Promote energy competition, ensuring Ohio's energy mix remains diverse and resilient.
- Advance Ohio's energy independence by fostering local, homegrown power generation.

With the understanding that this bill is nearing its final form we continue to propose the inclusion of following amendment to Sub. H. B. No. 15:

1. Explicitly exempt solar and wind projects within priority investment areas from S.B. 52 restrictions, enabling development without additional local bans.

This amendment would amplify the bill's economic benefits and keep Ohio competitive in the evolving energy landscape.



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To conclude, H.B. 15 modernizes Ohio's energy regulations, promotes economic redevelopment, and enhances transparency. We commend the General Assembly and appreciate the bill sponsor for his leadership. OHCEF strongly supports this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.