

Interested Party Testimony to the Ohio House Energy Committee on HB 15
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Chairman Holmes, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Glassburn, and members of the House Energy Committee,

I am writing today as a Christian voter and longtime advocate for health and housing security to thank you for undertaking a major reform of energy policy in Ohio. I am so grateful you are pursuing the goals of reducing energy burden - a serious factor in the affordable housing crisis for many Ohioans - and increasing the resilience and dependability of electricity supply.

I'm submitting this as an interested party since I haven't yet been able to read about the full range of policies in the current bill. But I want to encourage you to include three specific reforms which will significantly benefit Ohioans:

- Include the Community Solar pilot project which could power up to 250,000 households and reduce subscribers' monthly bills. This would be such a blessing to struggling ratepayers such as tenants who can't otherwise benefit from the lower costs of solar power.
- Repeal subsidies to utilities, particularly the OVEC coal plant subsidies which have already cost Ohio ratepayers half a billion dollars. And a third proposal, which I am not sure is in your bill:
- End policies which discriminate against some forms of energy generation and advantage others.

Lowering electric costs requires choosing the most cost-effective generation and eliminating subsidies, such as the OVEC coal plant charges which were imposed on ratepayers by HB 6 which the General Assembly passed in 2019. I was very impressed by this quote from you, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, which I read in an article in [Daily Energy Insider](#): "It is not the role of the state to favor one form of generation over another. Instead, we should open the market to dispatchable energy generation to address future energy shortages."

Churches across Ohio support community emergency assistance programs that try valiantly to prevent utility shut-offs by providing small grants to households in crisis. I ran a foundation for the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio for a decade and consistently heard from grantees that their funds for utility assistance were exhausted early every month. Electric prices are going to rise steeply in Ohio this year. The number of heat emergency days is increasing in our state. These two factors are a perfect storm for low-income households who can't afford to cool their homes, and whose health is put in serious danger on hot days. Growing heat emergencies also put terrible strain on our grid in the summer. By reducing peak demand, solar and wind projects help keep prices lower for all ratepayers on these days of excessive heat, and also help to prevent potentially deadly blackouts.

I visited a wind project on a farm in Van Wert County a few years ago and was tremendously impressed by the farmer's testimony on how much the dependable lease income helped her family farm business to survive despite vicissitudes in commodity prices. She also noted that her children's schools had improved enormously due to the property tax. Changes in Ohio's law on wind turbine setbacks and SB 52 erecting risks for utility scale solar that other generation projects don't face have caused many developers to abandon renewable energy projects that could otherwise be rapidly completed and provide a triple benefit:

- More electricity for Ohio's grid
- Stable annual revenue for Ohio farmers, who face enormous new challenges this year to their bottom line, and
- New property tax income for Ohio counties without burdening households who are crying out to the General Assembly for relief.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am grateful you are working to improve electric generation, reliability, and affordability and will be praying for your work to bear fruit to benefit all Ohioans.