

Proponent Testimony (written) on HB 303
Ariel Miller
Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
October 1, 2025

Dear Chairman Holmes, Vice-Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Rader, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for this opportunity to testify in favor of HB 303! The community energy pilot program proposed by the sponsors of HB 303 is absolutely timely and practical. Ohioans have already faced inflation of more than 25% in electric costs this summer.

You wisely included community energy in your major energy reform law, preparing for the huge increase in electric demand projected for our state. Thank you for launching the community energy pilot again after the Senate failed to embrace it this summer.

I celebrate that small, regional projects allowed under your HB 303 pilot could come online quickly, avoid the PJM bottlenecks, buffer peak demand, and help prevent blackouts that can be devastating, especially for low-income people. I'm thinking of elderly people losing power during a deadly heatwave, and food spoiling in the refrigerators of families already enduring hunger across our state. If it passes, your bill will help prevent these ordeals.

I am writing as the current co-chair of advocacy for the Cincinnati-based interfaith initiative Faith Communities Go Green, which has gladly testified in favor of similar bills sponsored by Republicans in the Ohio House over the past few years. As advocates for stewardship of Creation, we applaud that you have included renewable generation as one of the options in the HB 303 pilot, because this would reduce our state's greenhouse gas emissions and protect Ohioans from deadly particulates that trigger asthma attacks and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Before volunteering with Faith Communities Go Green, I spent a significant chunk of my career leading a foundation of the Diocese of Southern Ohio which helped local congregations strengthen community solutions to the housing crisis, among other urgent needs. Ohio's faith- and community-based emergency assistance programs have struggled for years to help their neighbors prevent utility shut-offs. Even fifteen years ago, the nonprofits I worked with ran out of utility assistance funds early every month. This has to be even truer as electricity prices hit unprecedented highs.

Now, more than ever, utility costs are a growing factor in housing insecurity. With HB 15 you enacted really important consumer protections. HB 303 bill is another creative and effective step you can take to mitigate energy burden for small businesses and households. Many, many thanks! I'm praying joyfully every day that you succeed in shepherding this bill safely through the Ohio House and on through the Senate!