



**Senate Energy Committee
SB 2 Proponent Testimony
Evan Callicoa, Director of State Policy
February 18, 2025**

Chairman Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for Senate Bill 2. My name is Evan Callicoa, and I am the Director of State Policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau. Whether it be electricity, natural gas for operating heaters or grain dryers, or any other form of energy consumption, energy is critical to the agricultural industry, both in supply and demand. When analyzing energy legislation, we look to ensure it protects landowner rights, guarantees consumer protections, and supplies reliable energy at free market prices. As introduced, SB2 takes important steps to accomplish all three.

While energy is a vital component of the work our members do every day, our scope within the energy market in Ohio is limited to that paradigm: how energy impacts our members as consumers and landowners. We appreciate the opportunity to speak to the energy needs of those working in agriculture in Ohio.

Firstly, repealing the solar energy credit program will help ensure that solar projects will be one step closer to being more closely tied to the supply and demands of the free market. It is essential to understand our unique perspective on this issue. OFBF is not opposed to any particular form of energy generation. Conversely, we support an all-of-the-above approach to energy generation to meet the needs of all of Ohio. Additionally, one of our founding principles as an organization is the protection of private property rights. This provides for a complex lens through which we view both energy projects and legislation. Repealing the credits under the solar energy credit program will bring a more level playing field when decisions are being made on how land is used when siting energy projects across the state. Development of all kinds (residential, commercial, energy, etc.) is rapidly occurring across our state. Having all interested parties on a level playing field is the only way that farmers even have a chance to compete in the land market.

Secondly, transitioning to a market rate offer will ensure that energy in our state is supplied at the lowest possible price according to market conditions. OFBF strongly supports energy regulations that allow the industry to thrive, and ensuring our members pay a fair price for their energy is essential. Whether it's a young adult reading their first electric bill or a farmer with 40 years of experience estimating heating costs for the upcoming winter, understanding these bills can be challenging. We also support the provisions of the bill that will give consumers ample notifications that their contract is expiring and what options they may have to find a new offer that best meets their needs. The establishment of the Consumer Choice Billing program (CCB) is a significant step forward, helping consumers better understand the specifics of their energy



costs without hidden fees and confusing language. The consumer protections created by the CCB simplify billing, ensuring that all energy customers, whether large or small, can understand the details of their energy costs and are protected from hidden fees and complicated terminology.

Finally, OFBF remains committed to preserving farmland through various legislative, regulatory, and programmatic efforts. The establishment of Priority Investment Areas facilitates the development of new energy generation without sacrificing farmland. By incentivizing locations such as brownfields and former coal mines, we can provide a more reliable energy supply while safeguarding our industry's most vital finite resource: land. Ohio lost nearly 300,000 acres of farmland from 2018 to 2023, and every acre that remains in production supports agriculture and ensures that our members' bottom line translates into savings for consumers.

OFBF remains committed to ensuring our members receive reliable energy at market rates and that the infrastructure supplying that energy respects their rights as landowners. We urge the General Assembly to study other ways to protect landowners and encourage more responsible land use in our state, including eminent domain reform and support for land use planning, just to name a few. We would like to thank Sen. Reineke for introducing this legislation, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.