

Senate Bill 2  
Proponent Testimony of Charles W. Keiper II before  
The Ohio Senate  
Senate Energy Committee  
February 18, 2025

Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Energy Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on SB 2.

My name is Chuck Keiper. I come before you as the CEO and Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC). NOPEC is a regional council of governments that currently provides retail electricity and natural gas aggregation service to over 900,000 residential and small business customers in more than 240 member communities throughout 19 counties in the state of Ohio. As the largest public retail energy aggregation in Ohio, NOPEC has been in operation since the beginning of electric deregulation in Ohio 25 years ago.

NOPEC strongly supports SB 2. We commend Senate Leadership's and this Committee's free market approach to the Ohio electricity market. The free market for electricity has been proven empirically to work to the benefit of Ohio ratepayers.

In November of last year, Cleveland State University researchers released a third Study on how Ohio's deregulated electricity markets have performed since 2011. This study was a follow up to two earlier studies conducted jointly by The Ohio State University and Cleveland State University in 2015 and 2018. Attached to this testimony is an Executive Summary of the CSU study. The study found that since 2011, Ohio consumers have saved Ohio electricity consumers more than \$37.5 billion or nearly \$3 billion per year. This translates to about \$261 per average household each year or nearly \$3,400 per average household since 2011. It also found that competition has driven down average electricity prices in deregulated Midwestern states, while their regulated peers have seen a steady increase in the price of generated electricity. There is no question that competition has outperformed traditional monopoly regulation in this State. This bill creates a long-needed energy policy for Ohio and makes it clear that there will be no return to ratepayer-funded utility monopoly regulated generation in Ohio, and we thank you for that wise policy approach.

We also support the pro-consumer protection provisions contained in this bill, especially three key ones. First is the elimination of a bad remnant of HB 6 that has cost Ohio consumers hundreds of millions of dollars to subsidize the 65-year-old OVEC plants that should be able to either make it or not make it in the free market without ratepayer subsidies. Secondly, NOPEC supports the bill's elimination of Electric Security Plans to replace them with Market Rate Options for the generation standard service default offer. It is clear that the only security provided by Electric Security Plans has been to secure utility's excessive profits. Last, we applaud the inclusion of customer refunds for utility charges later found to be unlawful. This remedies a long Ohio Supreme Court decision that prevented customer refunds and has been a NOPEC priority for a long time.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 2.