

Opposition Testimony

SB 2

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I am writing in opposition to SB2 for the simple reason that many of its definitions are an exercise in magical thinking and have no connection to reality.

Speaking as a Green I can say with some authority that the definition of "Green Energy" found in section (41) (a), starting with line 1856 is ridiculous. You cannot make coal "green" simply by mixing it with wood chips or natural gas. The fundamental fantasy that this bill indulges in is the idea that making greenhouse gas emissions "cleaner" they become clean. Science tells us that we have to eliminate ALL greenhouse gas emissions, not simply reduce them. An oil spill of a million gallons is "cleaner" than an oil spill of 10 million gallons, but it is still an ecological disaster.

Similarly, natural gas cannot by any definition be called "green" in the 21st century. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂, and levels of methane in the atmosphere are rising at a disastrous rate. Fracking, the process by which methane is obtained causes pollution of water tables, earthquakes, and massive methane leaks. It is not Green.

Nuclear reactions, which create radioactive wastes that are deadly for thousands of year, has never been green. In fact, the Greens and the green movement were created because the radiation we are creating threatens future generations with genetic disease and other ills. Every moment an nuclear plant runs, our planet becomes less habitable.

The reason these fantasies are so dangerous to indulge in is that by defining dirty energy as clean, the dirty sources suck precious investment and resources away from the truly clean energy sources like wind and solar. With these definitions, the Ohio State legislature is turning our energy systems back to the 19th and 20th centuries.

Other nations and states are racing into the 21st century. California now almost daily

meets more than 100% of its demand with solar power alone. A growing list of nations are meeting 100% of their energy needs with renewable energy alone including Albania, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Iceland, Nepal, Paraguay, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They enjoy the benefits of pollution free, inexpensive, inexhaustible energy.

The energy policy outlined in this bill is dirty, expensive, and subject to market forces that cause power to become more and more unaffordable as time goes on. In other words, it is a race backwards, not forwards.

Every little detail in this bill, reveals an outdated perspective on energy production. For example, in line 1619, why limit self generators to 100% of their energy needs? If a corporation is willing to invest in a utility scale wind or solar installation, why not allow them to generate more than their needs? Why not 150% or 200%? Real world experience shows that distributed generation strengthens the grid and provides power more reliably and cheaply. The answer, of course is that this legislation was written for and probably by the utility companies it benefits. They see such truly clean generation as a threat to their immense profits and therefore can't be tolerated.

"All of the above" is not an energy policy. It is the lack of policy. Some energy sources are better than others. Wind, water and solar are better than coal, gas, and nuclear. By attempting to deny this reality, SB2 takes Ohio down a dead end path, following obsolete technologies as the rest of the world moves into the future.

The fundamental reason this bill promotes such bad policy is that those of us who altruistically want a truly clean energy future for Ohio are locked out of the process. This bill was written by and for lobbyists for the energy companies who stand to profit from it, while citizens are limited to a few minutes of desperate testimony, trying to make you see the truth in 180 seconds; trying to counter months and years of carefully fostered falsehoods that are clouding your judgement. Please take a deep breath, come to your senses, and remove coal, methane, and nuclear from the definition of "Green" energy sources.