

February 28, 2025

TESTIMONY  
[SCR2](#)

Senate Energy Committee

Brian M. Chavez, Chair

Al Landis, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Energy Committee,

My name is Sarah Montalbano. I am testifying on behalf of Center of the American Experiment. American Experiment is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public policy organization operating in Minnesota and North Dakota and one of the largest grassroots organizations in the state. I am testifying regarding the importance of grid reliability in Ohio and microgrid technology.

Skyrocketing energy costs have reminded Ohioans of the importance of reliable, affordable energy. Yet our current energy policies undermine reliability and make electricity more expensive. Prices are rising in areas with carbon-free mandates and areas that, to comply with the federal government's emissions rules on power plants, are closing reliable coal generation.

SCR2 recognizes the importance of grid reliability and security. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) [found](#) that PJM is at an elevated risk of shortfalls in extreme conditions in 2026 and beyond because "resource additions are not keeping up with generator retirements and demand growth." PJM is experiencing large growth in data centers that are driving higher electricity demand forecasts.

SCR2 directs the Assembly to consider adopting a microgrid pilot program, though falls short of offering a specific definition. Microgrids are small electric grids that consist of individuals or small, self-selecting groups that select their own distributed investments and generation. Microgrid participants can choose what technologies to use, including wind and solar, battery storage, or traditional generators. One promising idea is a microgrid powered by a small modular reactor (SMR), which the Air Force intends to [pilot at Eielson Air Force Base](#) in Alaska by the end of 2027.

Microgrids can prevent mass blackouts and enhance cybersecurity because decentralized grids diffuse the risks involved with any single point in the grid being compromised. Strategic deployment of microgrids can help critical infrastructure stay online, such as hospitals, military installations, and municipal services like fire and police.

The microgrid is profoundly pro-consumer compared with the status quo vertically integrated monopoly utility model. In a regulated market, customers cannot choose a different utility and must endure poor service and rising rates.

In conclusion, legislation like SCR2 would encourage legislators to prioritize grid reliability and resilience as well as consider microgrid pilot program legislation. Further debate and discussion about the potential for microgrids in Ohio could only benefit the people of this state.

Thank you for your consideration and your dedication to affordable, reliable energy for Ohio families.

Sincerely,

Sarah Montalbano

Energy and Environmental Policy Fellow

Center of the American Experiment