

OHIO SENATE ENERGY COMMITTEE
INTERESTED PARTY SB 2
MARCH 4, 2025

Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith and members of the committee. My name is Mimi Plevin-Foust, and I'm the Legislative Committee Chair of Faith Communities Together for a Sustainable Future (FaCT). We're a statewide coalition of faith communities and individuals educating and advocating for a just transition to renewable energies, sustainable practices, and policies to address climate change. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Senate Bill 2 is a comprehensive piece of legislation with many worthwhile policies. FaCT agrees with the testimony of the OEC Action Fund on February 18th that the Legacy Generation Resource Rider should be promptly repealed statewide, that time limits on the OSPB 2 case process (both in Priority Investment Areas and not) be increased to greater allow community input and intervention to prevent harms to local property values and community health, and that there should be clear, strong restrictions around "mini rate cases" to prevent profiteering from that process.

With that stated, we urge this committee to step back and recognize the extraordinary moment we face as Ohioans, Americans and human beings on a increasingly destabilized planet due to the global heating caused by fossil fuel emissions, emissions that are still increasing worldwide at levels never before recorded in human history. We ask you to think of the child you care about the most in this world – your own child, grandchild, niece or nephew - and keep that child's future at the front of your decision-making process on this legislation and all other legislation going forward. Because if Ohio keeps favoring production of methane gas and other fossil fuels over cheaper, cleaner, readily available renewable energies like solar, wind and geothermal power, your favorite child on earth will not have a stable planet to grow old on. Neither will your young staffers and interns. Just look at the executive summary of the latest IPCC U.N. report.

For those reasons, we urge you to add energy efficiency policies and prioritize renewable energy above climate-destabilizing, polluting energies like methane gas in this energy plan. (Methane gas heats the climate 80 times faster than carbon at every step of the extracting, transportation, and burning process.)

Here are FaCT's proposed additions to the SB2 Energy Bill. The first three items are very good, mainly bipartisan bills that were expected to pass but allowed to die during lame duck. The public was told these bills would be covered by major new energy legislation in 2025. SB2 is that legislation, and these three well-crafted, bipartisan bills should be part of it:

1. Bipartisan Community Solar Pilot Program (HB197/SB247) – a bill to establish a framework for the Community Solar Pilot Program (CSPP) and encourage community solar facility development in Ohio. (<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/hb197/committee>). To guarantee quick action, please add HB197/SB247 Into SB2.

2. Bipartisan Voluntary Energy Efficiency Program (HB79) – a voluntary energy efficiency bill allowing Ohio’s utilities to run efficiency programs for residential and small commercial customers. (<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/hb79>). Add HB79 into SB2.

3. Regarding Virtual Net Metering and Meter Aggregation (SB 275) – a bill to set up a virtual net metering program on distressed lands. SB 2 also sets up priority investment areas on brownfields and former coal mines, which would promote economic growth, job creation, and land revitalization. We strongly support this part of SB 2, but believe land already damaged by fossil fuels should be used to generate clean energy through solar or wind projects, with virtual net metering used to credit the power from these facilities to the buyer.

4. To meet increasing energy needs, especially for data centers, Ohio should:

- Reduce wind and solar setback requirements to match other states,
- Simplify the Ohio Power Siting Board process while enacting the same or equivalent community comment and consideration rules for all forms of energy extraction or creation, and
- Modify existing law to continue and use the \$53.7M Solar Generation Fund to subsidize installations of more:
 - Solar Energy
 - Wind Energy (<https://windexchange.energy.gov/states/oh>)
 - Geothermal Energy* and
 - Battery Storage Systems.
- Prioritize renewable energies listed above over polluting, climate-heating Methane Gas and other fossil fuels. **

5. Further incentivize LEEDS-certified, energy efficient construction plus weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades to new and existing buildings, but especially for data centers, factories, and other high-energy use buildings to reduce/right-size Ohio’s ongoing energy needs.

6. Incentivize production of storage batteries in Ohio.

7. Immediately end the Ohio Valley Electrical Cooperative subsidies left by HB6 that prop up outdated, unwanted, and polluting coal plants; return collected funds to Ohio consumers.

*Ohio’s many abandoned coal mines and other abandoned deep wells may be excellent sites for geothermal projects: <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-odnr/geologic-survey/energy-resources/geothermal-energy>

****Favoring renewable energy sources over methane gas extraction, transport and burning will avoid:**

- Dangers of methane gas leaks and flares which speed climate heating 80 times more than carbon emissions,
- Polluting and using up scarce fresh water resources for fracking, especially considering the serious crop-threatening drought that Ohio has experienced in the past year or longer,
- Danger of radioactive, chemical-laden leaks from brine transport and storage into critical waterways and water tables,
- Danger of highly polluting, uncontrollable fires from fracking sites and brine injection wells;
- Increased global heating bringing more frequent, intense weather disasters and drought, and
- Increased lung disease, asthmas, cancers, and other health dangers to local communities, data center employees, executives, and other workers.

Thank you for your strongest consideration of these recommendations. Please contact us to answer any questions you may have.