

**Interested Party Testimony – House Bill 15**  
**April 8, 2025**  
**Ohio Senate Energy Committee**

Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Senate Energy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give Interested Party testimony on House Bill 15, whose goal is to increase power generation and improve Ohio's electric grid. My name is Cathy Becker, and today I am testifying on my own behalf as a concerned citizen of Ohio.

As you know, I have testified previously on both House Bill 15 and Senate Bill 2, so I'll make this brief. This testimony will address some commonalities and discrepancies between the two bills as they currently stand.

**1. Legacy generation resource**

Both bills repeal the legacy generation resource / OVEC charge starting with the bill's effective date. That's a great thing and should stay in the final bill.

**2. Solar Generation Fund**

House Bill 15 would disband the Solar Generation Fund and refund the \$50 million still in the fund to consumers. Senate Bill 2 would transfer this money to the School Energy Performance Contracting Loan Fund, which would make loans to school districts to install energy efficiency and renewable energy at schools. SB 2 makes better use of these funds. This loan program would save schools money, which would allow districts to hire more staff or lower property taxes. Please do all you can to make sure the school energy loan program is included in the final bill.

**3. Community Energy Pilot Program**

House Bill 15 includes another great program, the Community Energy Pilot Program. This program would allow construction of small generation facilities – 10MW to 20MW each – throughout the state, up to 1500 MW total. Of that amount, 500 MW would be constructed on distressed land or rooftops. People could subscribe to the energy generated by these facilities to meet their electricity needs. This would allow people to pool their energy use to achieve a lower price. The PUCO would certify the energy facilities, review the program, and submit a report to the General Assembly.

The Community Energy Pilot Program is a win-win for everyone. Consumers would save money, while small-scale energy generation is distributed across the state. It makes use of rooftops and brownfields instead of farmland to construct these facilities. And it allows for all type of energy sources. Please do whatever you can to ensure the Community Energy Pilot Program remains in the final bill.

#### **4. Ohio Power Siting Board**

Like Senate Bill 2, House Bill 15 puts a “shot clock” on the time for applications for major energy facilities to be reviewed at the Ohio Power Siting Board. However, its time frames are a little longer – 180 days for most applications, and 90 days for accelerated review of an electric generation plant, electric transmission line, or gas pipeline in a Priority Investment Area, or for a major utility facility on property owned by the applicant that needs no further consent. A major utility facility is defined as an electric generation facility 50 MW or more, electric transmission line of 100 kV or more, or a gas pipeline longer than 500 feet with pressure more than 125 psi.

Please keep the time frames for OPSB consideration of these facilities as they are in the House bill. These are very complex facilities, and the House time frames are already much faster than the OPSB normally operates. It simply takes time to explain these projects to the communities affected, and for the public to provide input. It also takes time for the OPSB to review applications that literally total thousands of pages on dozens of aspects of a complicated project. Cutting the review times to 45 days and 120 days as in the Senate bill would not allow time for people to find out something is being proposed, much less understand what, nor could the OPSB do an adequate review.

Again, many of the data centers that need the amount of power generated by major energy facilities covered by accelerated review are in residential areas. On the next page is a google map showing three data center campuses in heavily residential areas of Hilliard, Ohio. Each of these data center campuses has a large field close by where they could, if they bought the field, put a 100 MW gas plant – all within walking distance of neighborhoods, subdivisions, and businesses. If you are not going to allow local city, township or county officials to have any agency over where these energy facilities are located, then you must provide adequate time for OPSB and the public to review and provide input on these applications.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I can try to answer any questions.

Map note: The circle at the lower right of the map is where a major data center campus is under construction. Google maps is behind on showing the actual buildings, but data center buildings are there now, and more being built.

