

**Ohio Senate
Energy Committee
Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Bill 15**

*Rebecca Mellino, The Nature Conservancy in Ohio
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Good morning, Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Senate Energy Committee, I am Rebecca Mellino, Policy Associate for The Nature Conservancy in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony as a Proponent of House Bill 15.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization with chapters in all 50 states and projects in over 80 countries. We are a non-partisan, science-based organization that seeks to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work collaboratively with businesses, farmers, sportsmen groups, governments, and local communities to develop pragmatic solutions to conservation challenges, including land conservation, water quality, and climate change. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters, and we own and manage over 20,000 acres of nature preserves throughout the state.

Ohio is at a pivotal time in its energy future, and we thank Representative Klopfenstein and the members of this committee for making energy a priority in this General Assembly. TNC supports much of HB 15 and is encouraged by the opportunity for new generation at fair rates for customers. TNC applauds the sponsor for including the immediate repeal of OVEC subsidies in that artificially inflate the energy market. Instead of letting the market support cost effective energy generation, Ohioans have been paying for these coal plants which harm the air quality of our communities. TNC supports the inclusion of Advanced Transmission Technologies and the requirement for heat maps to be provided, these new resources will be valuable and important to ensuring Ohio's energy can move and be sited more efficiently.

Renewable energy is an important piece of the energy landscape if Ohio will meet its surging demand for energy. While it is a key piece in a mix of energy sources for our future, the adoption of utility-scale renewable energy in Ohio lags far behind neighboring states like Indiana. Many Ohio businesses seek renewable energy and because of a lack of generation here, spend their energy dollars in other states. Moreover, in a time when Ohio needs energy

generation to increase rapidly, renewable energy can be built and start producing for the grid more quickly than other types of generation.

TNC supports the Priority Investment Area language that is included in this version of HB15 and sees great opportunity for renewable development on brownfields and former coal mines in Ohio. Based on [research compiled by TNC](#), we know that over 500,000 acres of former mine land and brownfields are potentially suitable for renewable development in Ohio. This study looked at the slope of the land and the distance to transmission lines among other factors to assess this feasibility and we are excited for Priority Investment Areas to make these projects one step closer to reality.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

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