

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

Thank you for considering my written testimony in opposition to SB 294, a bill that would declare gas and nuclear to be clean energy, but would label solar and wind as unreliable for purposes of energy siting. This would make the Ohio Power Siting Board even more likely to approve gas and nuclear and less likely to approve solar than they already are. If nuclear and gas are officially declared “clean,” they could be eligible for clean energy tax credits that are meant for renewables. This would hurt Ohio companies like First Solar and Illuminate USA, which are leading solar panel manufacturers.

Several years ago, I purchased solar panels for my home. They were expensive, but it was a priority for me to do my part to help the planet by using a clean energy alternative. I was able to get a \$5,000 tax credit for installing the panels, and since then, my electric bill has plunged dramatically. For about six months of the year, I have no electric charges; my total cost per YEAR is generally less than \$300.

Before deciding that gas and nuclear energy sources are “clean,” please consider:

\* Fracked methane gas is 80% more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. The fracked methane gas comes from the polluting process used to frack, which converts billions of gallons of our fresh water into toxic radioactive waste every year. Nevertheless, right now, even our state parks and public lands are being fracked. I wonder how many Ohio residents understand the risks they’re taking just by living in this state? (See <https://environmentamerica.org/articles/fracking-is-an-environmental-disaster/> and <https://medicine.yale.edu/news-article/deziel/>).

\* Constant mining and enrichment of uranium is necessary to create nuclear energy, and highly radioactive waste, which must be stored for eons, is subject to dangerous leaks (see <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2024/12/radioactive-spill-reported-in-northeast-ohio-nuclear-power-plant.html> and <https://wchstv.com/news/nation-world/new-report-reveals-families-southern-ohio-living-land-risk-causing-cancer-radiation-levels-exceed-government-threshold-danger-contamination-pike-county-safety-duane-pohlman-cincinnati>).

Why are we insisting on giving priority to these dangerous forms of energy when we have energy sources that actually ARE clean. We should be doing everything in our power to encourage their use so we can reduce our reliance on dangerous gas and nuclear energy.

Consider:

\* By any measure, solar and wind are the cheapest and most easily deployable energy forms – cheaper and faster than gas and considerably cheaper and faster than nuclear. Also, they are much cleaner than either gas or nuclear.

\* Solar and wind can provide reliable power 24/7 when paired with battery storage. In California, demand for gas has dropped 40 percent in the past two years. Why? Because people are drawing from battery storage at night.

\* Ohio has several major solar panel manufacturers, including First Solar in Perrysburg and Illuminate USA in Pataskala, so no adversarial foreign nations are needed, and local companies are supported.

So why is SB 294 even being considered? Who stands to gain?

The gas and nuclear energy companies, with their money and influence, have financial incentives to boost their industries while destroying competition from wind and solar companies. If they can convince legislators (including those who stand to gain personally from the industries' success) to write laws that benefit gas and nuclear while short-changing ACTUAL clean energy companies, then they will make money. The impact on residents' health and safety and on the environment are not seriously considered. From what I can tell, it's all about the bottom line.

How has Ohio made it tougher for wind and solar to succeed?

\* Ohio's wind turbine setback law is among the harshest in the nation, which has hurt the industry.

\* A law was passed in 2021 that allowed 37 Ohio counties to ban solar and wind, but even in counties where renewable energy is NOT banned, the Ohio Siting Board has squashed more than 2,000 MW of solar energy, which would have been enough to power Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati combined.

What siting advantage does the gas and oil industry have?

\* Oil and gas are sited only on the state level, and often through a fast-track process that gives little to no notification to local communities and no opportunity for local officials to say no.

The current favoring of some energy industries at the expense of others would be made even worse if SB 294 is passed. We hear constantly about the need for more energy generation in our state, so why should we hamper industries that could actually respond to those needs, and in ways that do far less damage to residents and our environment?

Doesn't Ohio already have enough waste from the coal, oil, gas, and nuclear industries to handle?

Our state could profit from the use of ACTUAL clean, renewable energy, if only our legislators – who are supposed to be looking out for the best interests of the Ohioans they've pledged to serve – would stop getting in the way.

I urge you to say NO to SB 294 and consider the future of our children, our grandchildren, and our Earth home. Thanks for your consideration.

Deborah K. Cooper