



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Interested Party Testimony
Senate Bill 320

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Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Gentile, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is James O'Bryant and I am a consultant for the Environmental Defense Fund in Ohio. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify today as an interested party to Senate Bill 320.

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is a national organization that links science, economics, law and private-sector partnerships to solve our most serious environmental challenges.

SB 320 seeks to address the renewable energy and energy efficiency standards established in 2008 and paused in 2014. Given the concerns expressed about the arbitrary nature of the 2008 standards, it was clear that the issue required data-driven alternatives that were based on clear trends and achievable targets within the state's growing clean energy and efficiency industries. The Environmental Defense Fund, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, released a data-driven report titled, "Grounds for Optimism: Options for Empowering Ohio's Energy Market" on October 24 to provide viable options that could maximize financial benefits to Ohio.

The report was produced by The Greenlink Group in consultation with Runnerstone, a Columbus-based energy consulting group well versed in Ohio's energy landscape. The findings outline three scenarios of varying, but achievable levels of renewable energy and efficiency that maximize the financial benefits to the state. The three scenarios were compared against the baseline case of an indefinite pause of the 2008 standards. Depending on which of the scenarios is chosen, the report projects real economic benefits in multiple categories, including:

- 82,300 to 136,000 new jobs
- Increased payroll between \$4.6 billion and \$7.6 billion by 2030.
- GDP enhanced by \$6.7 billion to \$10.7 billion
- Health-care costs reduced between \$800 million in the near term, increasing to \$3 billion a year by 2030.
- A \$28.8 million to \$50.9 million savings to consumers by 2030.

The report does not recommend any particular pathway but instead evaluates the

trade-offs of different mixes of clean energy and efficiency. The findings include costs and benefits beyond simply the cost of electricity for ratepayers. It attempts to get to the true costs and benefits of these policies, including health care benefits as a result of less pollution.

Our report looked at the impact to Ohio's energy market and its consumers from standards, not non-binding goals. Investment is more likely to happen if Ohio has a standard than if we rely on voluntary action. The market likes data driven decisions and predictability and our current on-again/ off-again energy policy does not provide either of those. Ohio has a real opportunity to expand its clean energy industry, while also incorporating innovative efficiency measures. EDF, in fact, believes efficiency – investing in modern technologies that cut costly energy waste – should be a core principle of Ohio's energy policy.

We appreciate Senator Seitz's effort to move this conversation forward with SB 320, but because of the complexity of the issue we urge the General Assembly to consider the additional information provided in our "Grounds for Optimism" report and to postpone action until next year. There's no need to rush. Rather than quickly adopt arbitrary measures associated with alternative energy, we urge the General Assembly in its 2017 term to look comprehensively at the state's energy policies. In addition to the standards, there are related issues such as wind energy setback rules, grid modernization, utility business models, and on-bill financing that should be considered next year as part of a comprehensive energy bill.

Ohio has a choice: become a leader in the clean energy transition, or watch as other states take advantage of the benefits of clean energy and efficiency. There are reasonable options for attracting new investments to the state, creating jobs, and providing Ohioans with a cleaner, more efficient and affordable energy system. Ohio should position itself as a leader of the clean energy future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to try to answer any questions at this time.

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