

Proponent Testimony on HB 389
by
David Milenthal, Chair, Empower Saves

Mr. Chairman and the Committee, my name is David Milenthal and I am chair of EmpowerSaves a company focused on marketing energy efficiency products and solutions to the residential marketplace. I am testifying in full support of this intriguing approach to making energy efficiency mainstream to people of all incomes. My much too long career has been immersed in the marketing world having founded and eventually sold what was at the time the largest advertising agency in Ohio. In that role I was pleased on occasion to interact with you Mr. Chair. And though politically we did not agree on everything I always admired and continue to admire your out of the box thinking in designing and promoting innovative market-driven ideas. This bill is indeed one of those.

In reviewing this draft bill I have only one suggestion which I think will increase the success of this endeavor in maximizing residential uptake of energy efficiency solutions. It is common knowledge that the No. 1 most impactful energy efficiency home solution, especially in older homes, is to optimize the insulation of one's home--particularly attic insulation which stops the upward escape of wasted energy generation out of the home. Proper insulation can cut carbon emissions and most importantly reduce one's utility bill by 20% or more. Few if any other energy efficiency products will meet that standard.. In Ohio most homes are heated by gas rather than electricity. And yet the committee seems to have left the gas companies and their potential for program adaptation out of the bill. Yes, the gas companies voluntarily have an old fashioned energy efficiency rebate program that can be effective if the customer chooses to go through the hassle of dealing with it. . But this bill could give the companies a signal to modernize and streamline their program to meet your goals, Mr. Chairman.

I and others have many suggestions for how their participation might be shaped. But I will leave that to further deliberations once the bill is passed. I only ask that you amend the bill to include and build them into the program and encourage their participation and revision of their program.. Without their participation in a creative new way I fear that you will fall short of the ultimate success you can achieve in mainstreaming the most important solution--insulation--in meeting your goals. Thank you for your consideration.