



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
HB 389 - Proponent Testimony  
Sarah Spence, Executive Director  
September 29, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Public Utilities Committee: thank you for allowing me to submit written only proponent testimony for House Bill 389. My name is Sarah Spence, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF). I am sorry that I cannot be with you in person today, but am traveling out of state for our Conservative Energy Forum national conference.

OHCEF was founded in 2015 to provide a forum for conservatives to discuss a diverse, all-of-the above energy portfolio – one that includes not only existing sources of traditional energy generation, but one that also seeks to expand the development of clean and renewable energy sources. OHCEF believes that clean energy and energy made clean through technology can strengthen both our economy and our national security while providing unmatched opportunities for Ohio-led innovation and job creation.

The cheapest and cleanest form of energy is the kilowatt hour that we don't need to produce. Smartly crafted energy waste reduction programs use proven conservation practices to reduce energy usage and lessen the need for increased energy production. HB 389 is a product of work with utilities, environmental groups and interested parties to create a smartly crafted, free market, consumer choice energy waste reduction program.

HB 389 would allow residential customers to take advantage of energy waste reduction programs automatically; however, if they find that the program isn't working for them or simply do not want to participate, they can choose to opt-out. For larger businesses that may not have the technical expertise or staff to help with energy waste measures, they can choose to opt into the program so they can get the benefits. This allows for more flexibility than the previous mandated program.

The legislation makes other improvements to the previously mandated program. The cost to residential customers is capped at \$1.50 per participating customer and there's also a cap as to how much utilities can spend in running the program. There's also a specific requirement for the PUCO to audit these programs to make sure residents are seeing more benefit from the program than the cost.



Most importantly, the legislation focuses the voluntary program on proven types of energy waste initiatives and rejects other forms of energy waste reduction that were counted toward the mandated percentage reduction, but didn't actually reduce energy consumption. This will ensure that customers enrolled in the program will see true savings on their bill and reduce their energy usage.

We'd like to thank the bill co-sponsors, Rep. Seitz and Rep. Leland for their diligent work in working with all interested parties to craft this piece of legislation.

Thank you again for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of HB 389. If you have any questions for me, I would be happy to meet with committee members.