

**Ohio House of Representatives  
Public Utilities Committee  
Proponent Testimony - Written  
House Bill 89**

**Tracy Freeman, The Nature Conservancy in Ohio  
October 26, 2021**

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Chairman Hoops, Vice-chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as a proponent to House Bill 389. I am Tracy Freeman, Government Relations Director at The Nature Conservancy in Ohio.

The Nature Conservancy is 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, government, non-profit entities, and local communities to develop pragmatic, market-based solutions to conservation challenges, including water quality, environmental habitat degradation/fragmentation and climate change. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters.

Thank you to both sponsors Rep. Leland and Representative Seitz for your work on this bill. We are adding our name to the list of numerous supporters of this bi-partisan legislation that provides a framework for utilities to voluntarily offer energy efficiency programs to consumers. TNC strives for cooperative solutions that offer both flexibility and protection for both people and nature. We know that the only way to ensure durable policy is to have bi-partisan support and this bill is a perfect example.

For those who are concerned about the guardrails around such programs the bill establishes guidelines for utilities and requires auditing by the state Public Utilities Commission. There are cost caps for both the utility and customers. This legislation also includes a component to address equity shortfalls by including a program to help lower-income energy users. It is also voluntary for both the utility and the customer, however opinion polls over the past 4-5 years consistently indicate a majority of Ohioans support energy efficiency programs, so we believe many Ohioans will welcome these programs.

You may have heard that the cheapest energy is that which you don't use and that is at the heart of energy efficiency. Less harmful emissions from energy production translate into cleaner air for all of us. It is rare in the aftermath of House Bill 6 to see bi-partisan energy legislation that moves Ohio toward a lower carbon future, and we urge you to vote yes on House Bill 389. Thank you.

*Tracy Freeman*  
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