



**Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
Chair Bob Peterson
Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 52
Testimony of Melissa K. English
Deputy Director, Ohio Citizen Action**

March 23, 2021

Chair Peterson, Vice-Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Energy & Public Utilities Committee, my name is Melissa English and I'm the Deputy Director of Ohio Citizen Action. I thank you for the opportunity to present our opposition to Senate Bill 52.

I speak to you today on behalf of Ohio Citizen Action's 32,000 members and all Ohio utility ratepayers who have a stake in the decision before you.

The market for solar and wind is creating great economic opportunity in all corners of Ohio. This allows for landowners, school districts, and political subdivisions in rural Ohio to also share in a prosperity that is often denied to these areas. The state should not use the legislative process to erect political barriers to these benefits through bills like Senate Bill 52.

By artificially restricting supply and requiring a referendum process at the local level for wind and solar projects, this legislation will drive up electricity costs and targets certain energy generation resources at the expense of a prudent, diversified portfolio. Many of our elected leaders like to tout their support for an all-of-the-above energy strategy. But Senate Bill 52 reflects the opposite of that philosophy by singling out clean energy generation sources and imposing a veritable moratorium on wind and solar development. We cannot have it both ways.

Ohio companies across all sectors are increasingly choosing to obtain fixed-cost renewable energy to power their operations. Senate Bill 52 dramatically hinders their ability to exercise energy choice, manage their energy costs, and take control of their energy future. This will only serve to dissuade these companies from staying in or relocating to Ohio. Many Fortune 500 companies are proud to have adopted both short and long-term renewable energy and sustainability goals. As you consider this legislation, remember that measures such as these raise a red flag to these large companies that Ohio is not ready to grow with them moving forward.

Finally, it is important to note that Senate Bill 52 is written to apply to projects that are already pending with Ohio's Power Siting Board or for a local permit. Wind and solar development

companies have in some cases spent millions of dollars to usher their projects through the process in good faith reliance on current law. Senate Bill 52 pulls the rug out from under these projects and provides absolutely no incentives to bring any future projects forward in Ohio.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 52 and ask that you instead consider what might be the best investment Ohio could make to improve air quality, save utility consumers money, and foster economic growth in all areas of the state. This may well be the last chance we get to do this right.