



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
SB 307 - Proponent Testimony
Sarah Spence, Executive Director
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Chair McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written only proponent testimony for SB 307: Accelerating Ohio's Auto Industry. My name is Sarah Spence, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF).

OHCEF was founded in 2015 to advocate for 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.

It is the spirit of Ohio-led innovation and job creation that brings us to support SB 307. If any of you watched Super Bowl commercials this February, it's pretty easy to see that the global auto industry is in the midst of transitioning from gas to electric vehicles (EVs). Ohio has over 108,000 jobs in auto manufacturing here, and many of those jobs involve making gas vehicles or gas vehicle parts. We need to be aggressive in sending a strong signal to the industry that Ohio is ready and able to manufacture and sell EVs if we want to see any of the \$330 billion announced investments on electric vehicle production by 2025. As Senator Rulli pointed out in his testimony, Michigan received a \$7 billion, 4,000 job investment from GM, and Tennessee and Kentucky will be seeing a combined \$11.4 billion investment and 11,000 new jobs from Ford. And just last week, North Carolina won a \$2 billion automotive assembly and battery manufacturing plant, creating 7,500 jobs.

SB 307 will help expand Ohio's vehicle manufacturing and supply chain industry through four areas: workforce development and factory retooling, EV market growth, EV infrastructure investment, and EV electrification planning. The workforce development and retooling provisions and EV infrastructure investment are what bring OHCEF to support this legislation.

While Ohio has a long history of automotive manufacturing, workforce training and factory retooling for EV manufacturing ensures that we have the facilities and workforce that signal to automakers that Ohio embraces EVs and encourages more private investment in our state. To support these efforts, SB 307 would create the Electric Vehicle Retooling and New Equipment Acquisition Program to provide grants to original equipment manufacturers and suppliers to purchase equipment to produce parts or components for or assemble electric vehicles. It would also focus on electric vehicle training and modernization by supporting community colleges, vocational tech centers, and trade schools that train auto technicians and electricians and have programs focused on electric vehicle and charging infrastructure manufacturing, installation, maintenance, and repair.

It should be noted that range anxiety is a real impediment for quick EV adoption, especially in rural areas. For EV infrastructure, regulatory reform is just as important as funding for real progress to be made in increasing EV charging stations. In areas where the free market will be slower to support private investment, electric utilities can play a role in infrastructure development. SB 307 provides regulatory certainty to Ohio's EDUs through updated guidance from the PUCO to deploy electric grid infrastructure through competitively neutral programs that support electric vehicle charging infrastructure development, minimize customer costs for infrastructure construction, and allow cost recovery.

We appreciate Senator Rulli's diligent and continued work on this piece of legislation over the past year with a wide variety of industry experts and stakeholders. We look forward to continuing work on this legislation as it moves through the committee process. Thank you again for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 307. If you have any questions for me, I would be happy to meet with committee members.