



Ohio Citizen Action

The premier grassroots mobilization team in Ohio and the Midwest

Before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senator Troy Balderson, Chair
Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Hearing on Substitute H.B. 114

Testimony of Rachael Belz, Executive Director Ohio Citizen Action

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and Members of the Committee: I'm submitting this written testimony on behalf of Ohio Citizen Action in opposition to Substitute HB 114.

This is an exciting time for clean energy advocates, in Ohio, throughout our country, and globally. Broad-based coalitions of businesses, conservationists, consumer advocates and citizens supported recent clean energy victories in Michigan and Illinois. These groups recognize that protecting public health and the environment can actually complement growing the economy and jobs. Just look at the opponent testimony on this bill – or opponents of last year's HB 554 or SB 310 from 2014, for that matter- and you'll see the same is true of Ohio.

What we and our allies want is to be on the same track at roughly the same pace as our Midwestern neighbors. We were neck and neck, until the

freeze set us back. This bill would further retard our progress, just as our competitor states are pulling ahead.

In 2015, eleven states generated at least 10% of their electricity from wind farms: Iowa (31%), South Dakota (25%), Kansas (24%), Oklahoma (18%), North Dakota (18%), Minnesota (17%), Idaho (16%), Vermont (15%), Colorado (14%), Oregon (11%) and Maine (10%). Last year, Ohio generated just 1.05% of in-state electricity from wind. That's about enough to power 116,000 homes. The DOE estimates that Ohio's potential for wind-generated electricity by 2030 is 2.4 million homes. That's a lot of unrealized potential, not only in economic and job growth from manufacturing, installing, operating and maintaining the turbines, but also potential savings in terms of air and water pollution and public health damage from displacing coal-fired electricity with wind-generated electricity.

Some lawmakers support legislation that would lock in higher electricity bills for Ohio's consumers at a time when they can least afford it through potential coal and/or nuclear plant bailouts. That's what the utilities desperately want – to be bailed out of their short-sighted business decisions by your constituents, their consumers. But your constituents, of all political stripes, have consistently supported the reduction of our reliance on coal-burning power plants and the transition to greater renewable energy and energy efficiency to fulfill our energy needs. This is what we hear when we knock on doors throughout Ohio, or speak with people on the phone. Just in case you're wondering, Sen. Balderson, this

includes 76 dues-paying Ohio Citizen Action members in Senate District 20 and many more in all 33 Ohio Senate districts, where we have knocked on doors since last I appeared in your committee.

It's time to move past the debate over clean energy standards once and for all. We must instead begin to address Ohio's overwhelming potential to develop innovative, comprehensive energy strategy. You could be leading the charge in building a proactive policy that solidifies clean energy standards and broadens the state's energy portfolio to include revisions to wind setback policies, net metering issues, and others. Wouldn't it feel great to be cheered on by your constituents at home over something so many people agree with? Isn't that the true definition of a "win-win" solution?