



Ohio SB 346
Proponent Testimony of Erin Bowser, EDP Renewables North America
Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee
Tuesday, November 10, 2020
10 a.m.

Good morning Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the committee. I am Erin Bowser, the Director of Project Management for EDP Renewables North America. We are a proponent of SB 346 to repeal HB 6 because we think Ohio has an exciting opportunity to craft a more forward-looking energy policy that embraces a clean energy future while attracting billions of dollars of investment to the State.

EDP Renewables is the largest developer, owner and operator of wind farm assets in Ohio. We are the fourth largest owner/operator in the world and within the United States we own and operate 53 wind farms and 8 solar facilities. I was hired by EDP Renewables in 2008 just two months after the bipartisan passage of Senate Bill 221 and led the development teams for our successful Ohio projects. My job is to deliver late stage projects through development and construction in Ohio and across the region. I have lived in Ohio most of my adult life and am a constituent of Senate President Obhof.

In the wake of Ohio's adoption of an Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard in 2008, EDP Renewables and many of our competitors rushed to the state eager to invest hundreds of millions of dollars employing people, securing land leases and performing due diligence studies for wind farm permitting. While the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) component was relatively modest compared to some other states, we responded to this market signal and invested heavily in helping Ohio deploy renewables in a conservative and incremental fashion.

The RPS set a 12.5% clean energy target by 2025 and included a cost cap to protect ratepayers.¹ It also contained a 50% in-state requirement to bring investment within the state's borders. This approach established a relatively conservative path for Ohio to diversify its electricity supply through a market-based mechanism, touching off a fierce competition to provide utilities with least cost renewables. In the process, Ohio would attract billions of dollars of investment to the state's rural communities, bolster our manufacturing sector to feed the clean energy supply chain, and add jobs and tax revenue.

The policy worked. Since 2008, EDP Renewables has invested more than \$700 million in Ohio through the development, construction and operation of 4 wind farms in Paulding and Hardin counties. These projects have paid more than \$21 million to hundreds of private landowners and nearly \$9 million

¹ Incidentally, SB 221 also set up an "Advanced" tier of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard dedicated to nuclear energy and clean coal, though the legislature repealed that section several years ago.

in property tax revenue for schools and localities while providing clean energy to Ohio utilities and some of the state's most important employers.

Our competitors did likewise. The wind industry has now invested more than \$1.4 billion in Ohio in new steel in the ground that took thousands of Ohio men and women to build. We pay \$7 million in property tax revenue each year and \$6 million to private landowners in annual lease payments. And despite what has at times been a challenging policy environment, the industry has delivered. Since 2008, Ohio has never once fallen short of a renewable benchmark and never come close to hitting the statutory cost cap.

But we could be doing much more. Just as passage of the RPS was a market signal to attract our capital to Ohio, HB 6 sent an equally powerful but opposite message: Ohio is less concerned with new investment in new projects and instead prioritized propping up aging legacy plants. As such, our company has de-emphasized Ohio wind and is pursuing those projects in more promising markets.

As you review energy policy anew in the Ohio Senate, we would posit that HB 6 created a false dichotomy: that Ohio must sacrifice a clean energy future at the expense of its energy past. But rather than pit technologies against each other, we encourage the State to leverage the strengths of each and maximize the contributions that can come from various energy sectors. The wind industry stands ready and willing to work with you on a twenty-first century energy policy that delivers least cost renewables at scale. The RPS is a proven, efficient market-based mechanism to deliver that outcome and is trusted by the capital markets. We can provide feedback on how it might be adjusted to meet certain policy objectives. Similarly, if the legislature wishes to pursue a different construct to attract investment in renewables, we are happy to bring our experience to that discussion as well.

Last, as you consider an energy policy for Ohio, we welcome all of you to visit one of our operational Ohio projects and learn more about how wind energy is contributing to the energy landscape. Thank you and I am happy to answer questions.

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Attachments

EDPR Ohio Fact Sheet
AWEA Ohio Fact Sheet
EDPR Ohio Testimonials