



**Ohio Senate  
Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Proponent Testimony  
Senate Bill 346**

**Leo Almeida, The Nature Conservancy in Ohio  
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Chairman Wilson, Vice-chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 346. I am Leo Almeida and I am a Senior Policy Associate 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 have chapters in all 50 states and work in over 70 countries across the globe. We work collaboratively with businesses, farmers, sportsmen groups, government and local communities to develop pragmatic, market-based solutions to conservation challenges, including air pollution. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters.

The Nature Conservancy opposed House Bill 6 last year because it was a missed opportunity to develop a comprehensive energy plan for Ohio. HB 6 did not allow sources of clean air and lower carbon emitters to equally receive benefits and continue to flourish successfully in Ohio. This bill provided financial certainty in a time of market distress to the nuclear and coal energy sectors while decreasing and essentially rendering the renewable portfolio standard (RPS) and energy efficiency resource standard (EERS) ineffective.

Repealing HB 6 is the right thing to do. It will reinstate the clean energy standards that propelled significant business investment in our state and saved consumers money. House Bill 6 reduced the RPS from 12.5% to 8.5% which sent the wrong message to businesses and investors in clean energy development. It removed the requirement to continue maintaining the standard once it reaches the percent required in the final year allowing utilities that reach an 8.5% RPS by 2026, to then potentially go back to 0% starting in 2027. Reinstating the EERS will help Ohioans. The EERS supports programs that have saved consumers \$7.06 billion. Energy efficiency programs are designed to reduce the amount of energy consumed and therefore reduce the amount of energy generated. Energy you don't use doesn't cost you money. This translates into less carbon emissions from the energy sector. If the goal of HB 6 was to encourage a lower-carbon future for Ohio, removing the RPS and EERS seems counterintuitive. Recent data using the full scope of utility charges to consumers indicates that if HB 6 goes fully into effect in 2021, Ohio ratepayers will see an increase in their energy bills. Repealing this bill and continuing the energy efficiency programs is estimated to result in a monthly average savings of \$7.01 per family.

As I previously testified, in July 2017, The Nature Conservancy commissioned a poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, on the attitudes of registered voters in Ohio toward clean energy. To sum up the most telling responses – a vast majority of Ohio voters support clean energy policies and nearly nine out of ten would tell an elected official to support policies that encourage greater use of all types of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Ohio. They also strongly support Ohio reaching the 12.5% RPS.



Overwhelmingly, Ohioans want to see more emphasis on energy efficiency, solar and wind power. Since our poll was conducted, other polls asking similar questions of Ohioans about clean energy have found similar results and have shown an increase in support for policies that embrace clean energy. Recent statewide polling conducted in August showed that 67% of voters support repealing HB6 and replacing it with a clean energy plan.

The Nature Conservancy urges this committee to pass SB 346 to repeal HB 6 because it was not public policy based on accurate information, it does not reflect the desire of Ohioan's to support all source of clean energy, the process was not open and transparent to Ohioan's and it was not a comprehensive energy bill. Instead, HB 6 effectively repealed successful policies that have supported renewable energy and energy efficiency to provide a legislative vehicle for a nuclear and coal bailout. SB 346 is an opportunity for the General Assembly to hit the reset button on Ohio's energy policy and to fully consider and develop a comprehensive energy plan which should include items such as grid modernization, electric vehicle infrastructure, net metering, and expanding distributed generation opportunities.

Developing a true comprehensive energy plan will allow us to harness all the potential we have as a state to be a leader in lower carbon energy sources and respond to current and future demand for a forward-thinking energy portfolio. We have no doubt Ohio's policymakers, businesses and manufacturers, municipalities, environmental and conservation groups, consumer advocacy agencies and all the others that have been a part of the process can come together to craft an approach that will better respond to what Ohioans want and need. We heard, during deliberations of HB 6, numerous organizations offering ideas that would move us forward as a state. Do not be daunted by the idea of a comprehensive approach. Ohioans have shown they embrace innovation, challenges and clean energy. We offer our organization's help to the General Assembly to create an inclusive approach that reinforces lower carbon goals, encourages the economic benefits of clean energy, incentivizes new technology to address current challenges related to energy storage, remove impediments to growth, and sends a clear message that Ohio is open for business.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 346. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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