



**Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, and Ranking Member Williams  
Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 52  
Testimony of Rachael Belz  
Ohio Consumers Power Alliance**

March 23, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Rachael Belz, and I am the Director of the Ohio Consumers Power Alliance, a project of the Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund dedicated to educating Ohio's energy consumers around opportunities to diversify Ohio's energy portfolio and policy actions that could impact consumer choice and spending. Our members are opposed to Senate Bill 52.

At a time when private sector demand for energy generated by renewable sources is at an all-time high, imposing a moratorium on clean energy development in Ohio makes no sense for our economy, our workers, or our air quality. Senate Bill 52 subjects renewable energy projects to a new layer of government regulation in addition to the existing process already in place with the Ohio Power Siting Board. No other energy generation source must submit to a "township-by-township" referenda exercise in this state.

Ohio's leaders have been continuing down an unfortunate and misguided path when it comes to crafting a state energy policy. From imposing restrictive wind setback regulations to scandal-ridden House Bill 6, there has been no genuine attempt to create a comprehensive energy plan that will move the state forward and improve our economy. Now, when the opportunity is before us to be innovative and embrace clean energy technologies, we are debating a bill that will only increase political risk for energy infrastructure projects that will deter investors from providing the upfront capital needed to build clean energy projects.

The legislation you are considering takes Ohio's energy future in the wrong direction and flies in the face of what consumers in this state want from their energy policy. Ohioans are ready for a diversified approach that ensures reliability, keeps costs reasonable, invites

new jobs and development, and reduces pollution in our air. We are not interested in government mandated obstacles that close the door on new investment send a message to businesses that Ohio would rather they choose another state to expand their markets and provide more jobs.

At a time when Ohio's leaders like to cheerlead attempts to bring people back to our state, this type of legislation shines a bright light on the problems that just might be the reason Ohioans are leaving for greener pastures. We represent Ohio's energy consumers, and I can tell you that they are tired of their voices being ignored.

Will you take this opportunity to reject Senate Bill 52 and instead begin the long-overdue process of developing a comprehensive, innovative energy plan for Ohio that promotes job growth, saves consumers money, and actually reduces harmful emissions? Or will you pass this bill and be proud of the headlines saying that, once again, Ohio is turning its back on energy advancement? This is our chance to take a step back and get it right. We strongly urge a NO vote on Senate Bill 52.