

As Introduced

135th General Assembly

Regular Session

2023-2024

S. B. No. 174

Senators Wilkin, Lang

Cosponsors: Senators Rulli, Romanchuk, Hoagland

A BILL

To enact sections 4929.50, 4929.51, 4929.53, 1
4929.55, 4929.57, and 4929.59 of the Revised 2
Code to allow for competitive retail natural gas 3
service suppliers to offer carbon offsets to 4
customers. 5

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 4929.50, 4929.51, 4929.53, 6
4929.55, 4929.57, and 4929.59 of the Revised Code be enacted to 7
read as follows: 8

Sec. 4929.50. As used in sections 4929.50 to 4929.59 of 9
the Revised Code: 10

(A) "Carbon offset" means an instrument certified by a 11
carbon offset registry that represents one ton of greenhouse gas 12
removed from the atmosphere by any method of mitigation 13
including: planting trees that absorb carbon dioxide, capturing 14
and burning methane gas produced by landfills or farms before 15
the methane enters the atmosphere, and improving energy 16
efficiency to reduce energy use and lower the associated carbon 17
dioxide emissions. 18

(B) "Carbon offset registry" means a nationally recognized 19
entity that engages primarily in the development of carbon 20
offset standards, methodologies, program registration, 21
verification oversight, and issuance of carbon offsets, whether 22
for profit or not. 23

(C) "Double counting" means a retail natural gas supplier 24
does either of the following: 25

(1) Sells the same carbon offset to two or more customers; 26

(2) Attributes the carbon offset produced from a single 27
method of mitigation to two or more methods of mitigation. 28

Sec. 4929.51. A retail natural gas supplier may submit an 29
application to the public utilities commission for approval to 30
begin a voluntary carbon offset program that allows all customer 31
classes to enroll and purchase carbon offsets to offset any 32
emissions that are the result of the customer's consumption and 33
use of natural gas utility services. 34

Sec. 4929.53. (A) An application to begin a voluntary 35
carbon offset program shall include the following: 36

(1) A copy of an agreement between the retail natural gas 37
supplier and one or more carbon offset registries that at 38
minimum state that the carbon offsets being sold meet the 39
necessary criteria to be considered a carbon offset and that the 40
registry or registries will conduct regular verification to 41
assure that the offsets are being applied correctly by the 42
supplier; 43

(2) A description of the types of carbon offsets the 44
supplier will offer to customers and a description of how the 45
supplier will prevent double counting. 46

(B) The public utilities commission shall approve an application described in division (A) of this section once the commission has verified that the supplier is working with the carbon offset registry or registries it lists in the application.

(C) An application described in division (A) of this section shall not be denied unless verification of the identified carbon registry or registries cannot be established.

Sec. 4929.55. A retail natural gas supplier's voluntary carbon offset program shall include at least the following:

(A) Procedures to allow for customers to opt in and out of the program;

(B) Provide information on a customer's monthly natural gas utility service bill that shows the amount of emissions that have been offset due to the carbon offsets the customer receives for enrollment into the program;

(C) The information described in division (B) of this section may be in the form of a certification by a carbon offset registry confirming the amount of emissions that were offset or in quantifiable units of measurements detailing that information.

(D) A retail natural gas supplier shall work cooperatively with applicable natural gas companies to ensure customers receiving natural gas service through that company will see the information described in division (B) of this section on their monthly natural gas utility service bill.

Sec. 4929.57. A retail natural gas supplier with a voluntary carbon offset program shall file an annual review with the public utilities commission. The annual review shall contain

at least the following: 76

(A) The name and contact information of the carbon 77
registry or registries the supplier is working with; 78

(B) The type of carbon offsets available to customers; 79

(C) The total quantity of greenhouse gases that have been 80
offset by the supplier's carbon offset program and that this 81
quantity matches the total amount of carbon offsets sold to 82
customers. 83

Sec. 4929.59. (A) The public utilities commission may 84
conduct an audit of a retail natural gas supplier's voluntary 85
carbon offset program to ensure the carbon offsets are being 86
applied correctly to a customer's account. 87

(B) The commission may only conduct an audit described in 88
division (A) of this section if the commission receives a 89
sufficient number of customer complaints related to a carbon 90
offset not being applied correctly, as determined by the 91
commission. 92

(C) A retail natural gas supplier that is subject to an 93
audit as described in division (A) of this section shall provide 94
the commission any information it determines is necessary to 95
complete the audit. 96