



House Public Utilities and Energy Committee

House Bill 398

Submitted by:

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Testimony for H.B. 398
Janine Migden-Ostrander, Consumers' Counsel

Chairman Hagan and members of the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee, I am Janine Migden-Ostrander, Consumers' Counsel and I am here representing the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel, the state's residential utility advocate. Our office, which represents over 4.5 million residential utility households, is offering testimony today in support of H.B. 398 introduced by Rep. Michael Skindell.

H.B. 398 would create a council on sustainable energy development. This council would be assembled with voting members from the House, Senate and also the governor's office and would include non-voting members from other state agencies including our office.

The council on sustainable energy development would be required to report to the governor and the legislature no later than 12 months after the effective date a detailed analysis of a possible renewable energy standard for Ohio, its potential impacts on Ohio and any recommendations as to establishing a standard. The council would also be required to monitor and publish activity on the development of companies whose business relates to biofuel and renewable energy.

A growing number of states have taken steps to increase their states use of renewable energy sources like, wind, solar and biofuel. As many as 20 states including Texas, New York and Colorado, have adopted some form of renewable energy standard also known as Renewable Portfolio Standards. Fifteen states have created renewable energy funds, which provide financial resources for renewable energy development. Other countries

have adopted or are attempting to increase the usage of renewable energy sources in the near future. For example, Great Britain is proposing to use 10% renewables by 2010. Parts of Denmark, Spain and Germany already get nearly 20% of their electricity just from wind turbines. It is past due for Ohio to move in a direction that will at least study this issue and the impact renewable energy resources can have on all consumers in this state.

With the prices of fossil fuels continually rising and with the prospect that America will be competing more and more in the global market with emerging countries such as China and India for limited sources of energy, it is imperative that Ohio develop a strategy that diminishes its reliance on non-domestic fuels. This will enable us to have more control over the sources and the prices we pay for energy. Furthermore, passage of this legislation will enable Ohio to study the economic development potential that renewable energy can provide.

We urge this committee to take the lead in adding Ohio to the list of other states that have already taken the initiative in setting renewable portfolio standards and establish this council so they can set the parameters for which Ohio can take its energy policy into the 21st century. We urge your thoughtful discussion and passage of this legislation and offer our assistance and technical knowledge where needed.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.