



Ohio Environmental Council
[Action Fund]

June 21st, 2023

To: Members of the Ohio House
From: Pete Bucher, Chief of Staff, OEC Action Fund
Re: House Bill 79

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing to inform you that the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund will be scoring House Bill 79 (HB 79) for the purposes of our Legislative Scorecard for the 135th Ohio General Assembly. **We urge a Yes vote on HB 79.** To the extent that HB 79 passes, the OEC Action Fund will be doing extensive public education on the content and the votes on this legislation due to its positive impact to Ohio's environment and the health of Ohioans.

HB 79 is a top energy policy priority for the OEC Action Fund. It rectifies the damage done by House Bill 6, and creates much-needed energy waste reduction (or energy efficiency) programs that are voluntary for both consumers and utilities. Thanks to HB 6, Ohioans have been without energy waste reduction programs that help reduce their energy consumption and energy bills for nearly four years. We appreciate that HB 79 recognizes that HB 6 went too far and that this bipartisan bill would restore such programs for Ohio residential customers and small businesses. Among the chief benefits of reinstating these programs are **combating air pollution by reducing energy waste, reducing strain on the electric grid, and lowering energy bills for Ohioans.** This legislation will allow utilities, with PUCO and stakeholder oversight, to create consumer and business friendly programs that will save consumers money on their electric bills while also improving air quality and public health. **To be clear: this bill will save Ohioans money in a time of skyrocketing energy bills.**

HB 79 also has a myriad of other benefits not provided by current utility, state, or local initiatives. This bill **specifically targets support to lower income families** and seeks to make efficiency technology affordable to them. The technologies supported will be specifically chosen to ensure they are not already included in the Inflation Reduction Act, and can start being rolled out as soon as the program is started. The impact of the bill will be immediate, reducing strain on our electricity grid as less energy is used and creating jobs for Ohioans to install the technology. Overall, HB 79 is a win for all parties involved.

At the center of HB 79 is the choice for consumers to either opt in or opt out of these energy efficiency programs. These standards are not forced upon consumers and businesses. Instead, lowered prices and economic incentives are being used to push people toward more efficient energy usage. Safeguards have been put in place to ensure that both consumers and businesses can opt out of the program if they so choose.



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We are at a critical point in the fight against climate change. The energy waste reduction programs that will be allowed under HB 79 are necessary for reducing our energy consumption and for our shift toward clean energy sources, all the while benefiting Ohioans. For our health, our environment, and for our wallets, it is critical that these energy waste production programs are put back in place to undo the misstep of HB 6. HB 79 will create jobs, create a more resilient electrical grid, and improve our air quality and public health. For these reasons, the OEC Action Fund urges members of the Ohio House of Representatives to Pass HB 79.

If you have any questions, please contact me at pbucher@theoec.org.

Sincerely,

Pete Bucher
Interim President OEC Action Fund