



# THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

## **Making Ohio a National Energy Policy Leader**

Interested Party Testimony  
Ohio Senate Energy Committee  
Ohio Senate Bill 294

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Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding **Ohio Senate Bill 294**.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am a senior research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, an independent research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

Until recently, the United States' demand for electricity had remained relatively flat for years. Regulators and grid-operators built power generators and transmission lines accordingly, anticipating that energy demand would grow slowly. Those projections proved inaccurate as computer data storage, artificial intelligence programs, electric vehicles, and cryptocurrencies have emerged rapidly, requiring and consuming massive amounts of electricity. New forecasts now predict that data centers alone will consume **almost 10 percent** of America's total electricity consumption by 2030.

Today, reliable, affordable electricity plays a vital role in America's national security. As China rapidly **ramps up** its energy production to support its pursuit of artificial intelligence, the United States risks falling behind in the AI race—a race it cannot afford to lose. The stakes could hardly be higher.

Fortunately, Ohio is positioned to be a major energy contributor and assist the U.S. effort to outpace China. Following many of The Buckeye Institute's recent energy policy **recommendations**, Ohio enacted **House Bill 15** and **Senate Bill 103** to emerge as a national energy policy leader. Senate Bill 294 only furthers the state's effort to supply low-cost, reliable electricity for our data technology, advanced manufacturing, and national defense sectors.

The bill reaffirms Ohio's commitment to smart energy policy by requiring the Ohio Power Siting Board to consider the following when it reviews applications for utility-facility certificates:

1. Whether the facility employs affordable, reliable, and clean energy sources.
2. Whether the facility prioritizes domestic energy production (other than energy generated by nuclear reaction).
3. Whether the facility minimizes reliance on foreign adversary nations for critical materials or manufacturing by prioritizing infrastructure that delivers energy to Ohio customers.
4. Whether the facility will deliver “affordable energy” as defined by true-cost accounting, which evaluates energy sources based on their full, unsubsidized lifecycle costs rather than prices distorted by subsidies, tax credits, or mandates such as the **renewable portfolio standards**.

These considerations, along with requiring a rigorous affordability analysis, emphasize Ohio's interest in providing affordable energy—with fewer cost fluctuations than intermittent sources—to help power the nation's critical technology race against hostile competitors. And that emphasis and example should be followed by other states and federal policymakers.

Senate Bill 294 builds upon the impressive work that this Committee and the General Assembly have done to keep Ohio at the forefront of energy and technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions that the Committee may have.



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