



Ohio Environmental Council
[Action Fund]

April 14, 2026

Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 298
Ohio Senate Energy Committee

Good morning, Chair Chavez, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Smith, and members of The Senate Energy Committee. My name is Spencer Dirrig, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund (OEC Action Fund). Our organization is dedicated to a clean, healthy Ohio where our democracy empowers all communities to thrive in harmony with the environment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 298.

The OEC Action Fund supports a clean, affordable, and reliable energy system. SB 298 advances this goal by expanding the market for distributed generation. By increasing distributed grid capacity and reducing reliance on the transmission grid, SB 298 can help control costs. Additional power generation during peak demand reduces PJM capacity prices, which are determined during periods of high usage. Avoiding the use of the most expensive generation sources during peak times benefits all consumers.

The OEC Action Fund recommends adding additional land-use types to the eligibility criteria under Sec. 4928.676 E. Specifically, we suggest including “An energy community under 26 U.S.C. § 45(b)(11)(B)(iii)1 that is within a census tract, or adjoining census tract, with a closed coal mine or retired coal-fired power plant.” This change would allow communities affected by the energy transition to benefit from Virtual Net Metering projects, thereby expanding development opportunities in former mining or coal-energy areas. We believe this addition is essential to support energy communities that previously depended on coal plants for employment and tax revenue.

Senate Bill 298 is a responsible step forward for energy reliability and affordability in Ohio. The OEC Action Fund urges its passage. Ohio has long led in energy choice, allowing residents to decide where their energy comes from and what type to use. This legislation removes barriers to energy access, enabling more Ohio businesses and local governments to benefit from the cost-saving benefits of Virtual Net Metering. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I would be happy to answer any questions.