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**FAITH COMMUNITIES
GO GREEN**

Energy reform bill moving fast this week in both houses of Ohio Legislature. Here's how to weigh in.

Monday, March 17, 2025

Dear Advocates for Creation,

Despite the tsunami of terrible news on federal environmental policy, we have the opportunity *this week* to contribute to a breakthrough for Ohioans. The General Assembly is fast-tracking a major energy bill that includes two policies Faith Communities Go Green has been championing for the past two legislative sessions: community solar and repealing the OVEC coal plant subsidies. Read on to find out how you can help lift these improvements over the finish line.

In addition, Dr. Anas Malik, a member of FCGG's Steering Committee, is speaking as part of a panel on "Climate Change Awareness: Why is it a feminist work and a religious/moral duty?" put on by John Carroll University this Tuesday. A political science professor at Xavier University, he will be speaking from an Islamic ethical perspective. You can join the [Zoom meeting at this link](#). The program is from 2:30 to 4 pm on March 18.

Yours,

Ted Bergh and Ariel Miller, FCGG Advocacy Co-chairs

photo below: signing postcards for community solar at FCGG's booth at the Earth Day Festival in 2022.

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The Ohio Legislature is advancing energy reform this week. Call or email your state reps immediately: Both houses of the General Assembly are fast-tracking legislation to improve Ohio's electric grid and supply, and to protect ratepayers from unnecessary costs. FCGG's Advocacy Team encourage you to contact your Ohio State Senator (on SB 2) and Representative (on HB 15) in support of two provisions which will protect health, mitigate climate change, and save households money if adopted:

- A community solar pilot program, and
- Repealing HB 6 subsidies for two OVEC coal-fired plants which have already cost Ohio ratepayers over half a billion dollars.

You can find your legislators' contact information easily by filling in your address in the "Who Represents Me?" box on the [Ohio Legislature home page](#), then clicking on the photos of your elected officials. Please include your experience and perspective as a person of faith. For example, if your congregation supports a local emergency assistance program that helps households prevent utility shut-offs, say so and commend the bills' impact in reducing monthly utility bills.

You can also submit written testimony on HB 15 by 3 pm on March 18 to the House Energy Committee, which meets March 19. Complete this [witness slip](#), and attach it as a separate document together with your testimony, addressed to Energy Committee Chair Holmes, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, and Ranking Member Glassburn to the Ohio House Energy Committee. Copy and paste this address into the "to" line on your email: OHRenergyCommittee@ohiohouse.gov

Here's good news for advocates for renewable energy. "It is not the role of the state to favor one form of generation over another," said Rep. Roy Klopfenstein (R-Haviland), the primary sponsor of HB 15. "Instead, we should open the market to dispatchable energy generation to address future energy shortages."

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slowing development of new generation, and reduce utility charges which burden ratepayers already struggling to pay rising housing costs including rent, mortgage interest, and property tax.

The Senate version - SB 2 - could pass out of committee as soon as March 18. The House Energy Committee could approve its own version on March 19, the date we'd like your testimony to be included. The bills are not identical, but legislative leaders expect to have a final bill on the Governor's desk within a few weeks.

The Ohio Environmental Council, which works closely with Green Umbrella, [supports the OVEC repeal and the community solar pilot](#). FCGG's Advocacy Team have been urging support for community solar for four years because of its ability to reduce energy burden for low-income households that can't install rooftop solar. This bill would make the necessary change in Ohio law to allow a congregation or nonprofit to implement a solar array and enable renters in the neighborhood to subscribe to the affordable electricity it generates. Rising electric costs, the increasing number of heat emergencies, and blackouts during the summer endanger both their housing security and their health.

Here are talking points suggested by Solar United Neighbors, which is part of the statewide non-profit coalition who support these parts of HB 15/SB 2. Because "solar" is a negative word for a number of Ohio legislators, Solar United Neighbors suggest you use the term "community energy" to describe community solar.

- **Energy Choice:** Community energy empowers Ohio customers to access local energy and save on electricity bills by subscribing to shared solar installations.
- **Rapidly increase generation** to get more electrons onto Ohio's energy grid.
- **Help reduce household energy bills:** Subscribers benefit from bill credits that lower electric bills. Other states with community energy programs are seeing 5% to 20% savings.
- **Robust and resilient energy system:** The community energy program aims to install 1,500 MW in new generation capacity, enough to power 250,000 homes.
- **Conservation and Revitalization:** Community energy promotes responsible and restorative land use by promoting brownfield remediation through private development of distressed sites, contributing to Ohio's energy infrastructure expansion and environmental cleanup.

Thank you in advance for contacting your state senator and state representative!

FCGG's advocacy team is focusing this spring on actions that faithful people in our region can take with a realistic hope of mitigating the growing environmental dangers to health and livelihoods of all people. We are still working on planning a series of workshops to share success stories illustrating strategies through which you can work with other local stakeholders to implement environmental protections that don't depend on support from the public sector.

Stay tuned! We welcome your ideas and feedback at advocacy@fcgg.org

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