

# CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

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## Reflections regarding SB 310

### *Ohio's Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards*

*May 5, 2014*

#### ***Background:***

Ohio law requires electric distribution utilities and electric services companies to secure a portion of their electricity supplies from alternative energy resources. By the year 2025, 25 percent of the electricity sold by each utility or electric services company within Ohio must be generated from alternative energy sources. At least 12.5 percent must be generated from renewable energy resources, including wind, hydro, biomass and at least 0.5 percent solar. All companies must meet annual renewable and solar energy benchmarks that increase as a percentage of electric supply each year.

SB 310 proposes that the state *freeze* these benchmarks at the current 2014 levels, and establish a study committee to review the appropriateness of such mandates.

#### ***Care for Creation***

*The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: nature. ... Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often ... we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift that we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations.*

*Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2014, # 9*

*Technologically advanced societies must be prepared to encourage more sober lifestyles, while reducing their energy consumption and improving its efficiency. At the same time there is a need to encourage research into, and utilization of, forms of energy with lower impact on the environment...*

*Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace 2010, # 9*

We offer these reflections, not as experts in appropriate energy standards, but as pastors called to protect God's people and God's planet by living our faith in relationship with all creation.

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Over the years, our Church has encouraged actions consistent with good stewardship: environmentally conscience consumer choices; individual and corporate actions that promote greater energy efficiency; and support for policies that will reasonably and prudently protect our environment.

## Support for Alternative Energy & Efficiency Incentives

The Catholic Conference of Ohio supports alternative energy and conservation incentives and resources. Alternative energy sources -- such as wind and solar -- benefit the environment, help reduce long-term energy costs, and offer another source for helpful job creation.

We are not advocating for specific benchmarks for alternative energy sources and incentives. However, we encourage the Ohio General Assembly to pursue reasonable and effective initiatives for energy efficiency and to develop alternate renewable and clean-energy resources.

Through firsthand experience, we have come to appreciate the impact the current energy portfolio standards have on improving the energy efficiency of church facilities and individual households. For example, the economic rebate incentives have allowed for affordable boiler replacement and lighting retrofit projects in many of our buildings.

## SB 310 Recommendations

We encourage elected officials to study the future direction of Ohio's portfolio standards and to determine if adjustments should be made to mitigate environmental concerns and make increased energy efficiency more affordable for all consumers.

We understand there is an ongoing debate over the need to freeze current standards while a study takes place. We ask elected officials to prayerfully consider if it would be more prudent for the sake of environmental stewardship to maintain our current policies and not freeze these standards while the study takes place.

We urge our elected officials to advance a concrete strategy that will empower Ohioans to use energy more efficiently so that we might hand over to our children and to their children a sustainable future.

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| • Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr<br>Archdiocese of Cincinnati<br>Chairman, Catholic Conference of Ohio | • Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Monforton<br>Bishop of Steubenville                                   |
| • Most Rev. Joseph R. Binzer<br>Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati                                      | • Reverend Charles Ritter<br>Diocesan Administrator of Toledo                                |
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