

# CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

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## **Catholic Bishops of Ohio statement to elected officials regarding Ohio alternative energy standards November 12, 2015**

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio share Governor Kasich's concerns over the *indefinite freeze* recommended by the Ohio Energy Mandates Study Committee.

In 2014, the Catholic Bishops of Ohio raised concerns regarding legislation (SB 310) that eventually froze the current clean energy standards for two years while the legislature further studied the issue. We felt it would have been more prudent at that time, for the sake of environmental stewardship, to maintain the current energy standards while the study took place.

The final report of the study committee, released on September 30, 2015, calls for an *indefinite freeze* on Ohio's clean energy target standards. This is based largely upon concerns over the new United States EPA rules regarding carbon dioxide emission levels and their uncertain impact on Ohio's energy policies.

Governor Kasich was among many Ohio leaders who questioned the need to maintain this freeze indefinitely. Rather than enacting this recommendation, Governor Kasich urges the Ohio General Assembly "to craft a bill that supports a diverse mix of reliable, low-cost energy sources while preserving the gains that have been made in the state's economy." We support this approach and believe the former clean energy standards should be re-enacted until such time that decisions are made and enacted.

Over the years, the Catholic community has encouraged actions consistent with thoughtful stewardship: environmentally conscious consumer choices; individual and corporate actions that promote greater energy efficiency and less waste; and support for policies that will reasonably and prudently protect our environment, our health, future job growth as well as future generations.

Pope Francis, in his recent teaching letter entitled "*On Care For Our Common Home*," writes of our long tradition of calling for the protection of God's creation. Regarding public policy, Pope Francis issues an urgent appeal for the development of policies in the next few years to drastically reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases (paragraph 26). He writes, "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay" (paragraph 165).

In 2014 the Catholic Bishops of Ohio wrote:

"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.”

The environmental challenge before us requires a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We encourage your leadership in addressing these challenges. As Pope Francis says, “true statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good” (paragraph 178). We offer you these reflections, our encouragement, and our prayers as you continue to determine appropriate public policies that will protect our common home.

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