



Ohio Environmental Council



LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

CONTACT: Trish Demeter

Cell: (614) 598-8374

Email: TDemeter@theoec.org

Ohio's Clean Energy Standards prevent asthma attacks and increase work productivity, study finds

Columbus, OH - Fewer asthma attacks. Less emergency room visits. Increased work productivity. These are just some of the benefits enjoyed by Ohioans on account of the state's clean energy standards.

These are the findings of a report released today by several environmental organizations that zeros in on some of the important reasons the Ohio General Assembly should ensure the standards return after a two-year "freeze."

"Our analysis proves what we've known all along: Ohio's clean energy standards support Ohioans' health," said Trish Demeter, Managing Director of Energy and Clean Air Programs for the Ohio Environmental Council. "Preventing these standards from continuing to deliver their very real benefits would be awful news for those with asthma, respiratory illnesses, and the most vulnerable among us – the elderly and children."

The report titled *Cleaner Air and Better Health: The Benefits of Ohio's Renewable and Efficiency Standards*, found that resuming Ohio's clean energy standards in 2017 would prevent at least 16,900 lost work days, 2,230 asthma attacks, 100 hospital admissions, 120 asthma-related emergency department visits, 230 heart attacks, and at least 140 premature deaths - all just in the first year.

Looking out to 2029, the public health benefits grow exponentially. Between 2017 and 2029, the clean energy standards would prevent 335,770 lost work days, 44,930 asthma attacks, 2,420 asthma-related emergency department visits, 2,060 hospital admissions, 4,470 heart attacks, and at least 2,820 premature deaths.

"Clean air supports our ability to breathe easier and lead healthy lives. Thousands of Ohioans are terribly impacted each year by bad air, which contributes to higher levels of sickness and chronic disease, and thousands of premature deaths," said Richard Hicks, Columbus Public Health Department. "This analysis reinforces what's been known in the public health community for some time, and if we know how to fix the problem, we should fix it. Reinstating the state's clean energy standards will improve air quality and have a direct, positive benefit on human health."

"I am on the front lines of dealing with the fallout from harmful air pollution. I see it in my job as a nurse at a children's hospital, and my son suffers from asthma," said Suzanne Fortuna, CNS, FNP of Kirtland, OH. "If we've got policies in place that we know are improving the health and well being of our families and children, what good reason is there for not moving forward with them?"

Last year, lawmakers voted to suspend Ohio's clean energy standards - with the enactment of Ohio Senate Bill 310 - and created the Energy Mandates Study Committee to assess their costs and benefits. The committee, composed of legislators from the Ohio Senate and the Ohio House of Representatives, and the chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, must consider air emissions and carbon dioxide pollution as part of their analysis.

The newly released report found that the clean energy standards will reduce Ohio's annual carbon pollution - a greenhouse gas that is a primary culprit for climate change - by about 10 million tons between 2017 and 2029. This is equal to avoiding emissions from the electricity consumed by 1 million homes over the course of an entire year.

"Not only are there immediate health benefits, the added bonus is that these standards help cut Ohio's contribution to global climate change that carries with it additional public health problems such as exacerbated allergies," said Samantha Williams, Staff Attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "With the historic effort to cut carbon emissions moving forward, this is the most cost-effective tool to protect public health, reduce carbon pollution that fuels climate change and meet the goals called for in the Clean Power Plan."

The report has drawn the attention of public health professionals and advocates alike.

"Moving away from energy sources that pollute the air is just common sense. I want my children to be able to run and play outside without fearing what they could breathe in, or being forced to stay inside on a hot summer's day because the air quality is just too poor to risk their exposure," said Laura Burns of Mansfield, OH. Burns is a mother of two children, and became active on air quality issues with Moms Clean Air Force in 2011.

"Not only can clean energy standards lower bills for customers and create new job opportunities for Ohioans," said Madeline Fleisher, staff attorney with the Environmental Law & Policy Center in Columbus, "but they can cut health costs, too."

Today's report released by the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC), and the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) comes just weeks before the General Assembly's study committee is set to release its own report on September 30.

Beth Nagusky, LCV's Ohio Policy Director said: "Restoring Ohio's clean energy standards is good for our health, environment and economy. The vast majority of Ohioans support clean energy and these crucial standards. Now, it's time for the Ohio Legislature to do what's best for our state and lift the freeze while safeguarding public health."

The findings described in this report were generated by converting the targets of Ohio's energy efficiency and renewable energy standards into quantitative environmental and public health benefits, based on an M.J. Bradley & Associates (M.J. Bradley) model and analyses conducted by the Clean Air Task Force (CATF) and MSB Energy Associates.

Read the report and learn more about its findings here <http://www.nrdc.org/energy/files/ohio-clean-energy-standards-benefits-report.pdf>

-end-