



Ohio Citizen Action

The premier grassroots mobilizing and organizing team in the Midwest

2018 year-in-review



OHIO CITIZEN ACTION

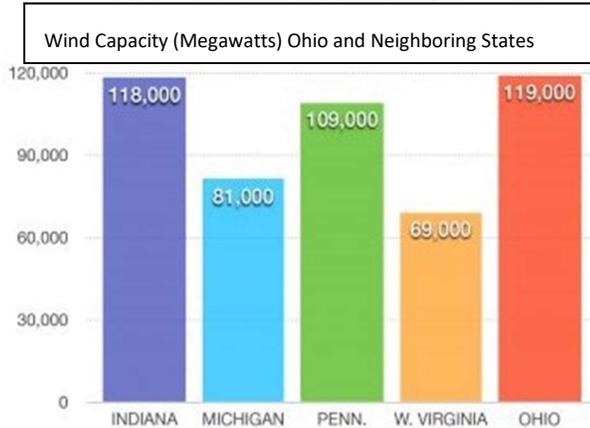
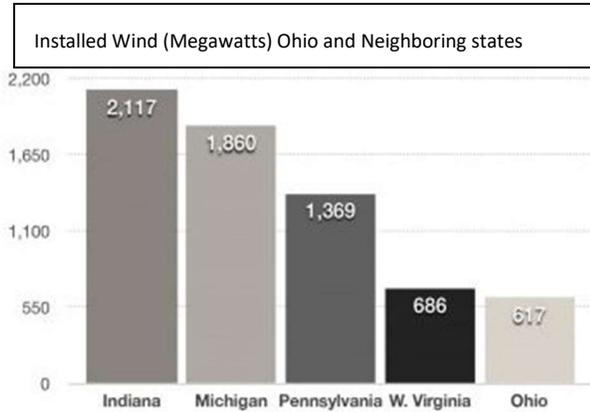
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Coal and Energy

With several bills designed to further stall progress on energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, we adopted a primarily defensive legislative strategy for 2018, which proved successful. We were pleasantly surprised to see the issue of developing new wind projects gain momentum. In addition to work in the



announced the bankruptcy of subsidiary First Energy Solutions (FES) in April, the bill had stalled and also eventually died at the end of the legislative session. **By May, we joined a lawsuit with other Ohio environmental groups to ensure that First Energy pays enough into a fund for decommissioning and clean up at their nuclear plants, to let customers and taxpayers off the hook.** Despite the bankruptcy news and announced nuclear plant closures, we do anticipate another nuclear bailout bill in 2019.

In addition to the wind setback fix included in HB 114, two stand-alone bills were introduced to recalculate the appropriate distance between wind turbines and property lines or dwellings. Considering Ohio's tremendous wind capacity, the technical ease of the fix, and the potential to unleash \$4.2 billion in economic development, we prioritized work on wind setbacks in 2018. **Ohio Citizen Action members and allies sent 13,917 letters, phone messages and postcards to lawmakers about restarting Ohio wind project development.** We understand that bills to fix wind setbacks will be introduced for 2019.

legislature, we toured a wind farm in June and testified at an Ohio Power Siting Board hearing in July in favor of the **Icebreaker Wind Project**, proposed off the shore of Cleveland.

Defeating or slowing down **HB 114** became a particular focus early in the year. The bill would have gutted Ohio's recently reinstated renewable energy and energy efficiency standards by making them voluntary. Later, language was added to fix the "wind setback" problem that had halted new wind projects since 2014, but the bill on balance was bad for both consumers and the environment. **Ohio Citizen Action members and allies made 2,586 calls to legislators opposing the bill, before it died at the end of the legislative session.**

In 2018 we planned to continue the fight against **SB 128**, a proposed \$300 million annual customer bail-out of the state's flagging nuclear power plants as well. However, by the time First Energy



Melissa English and Rachael Belz of Ohio Citizen Action meet Matt Dolan - (R) Chagrin Falls- sponsor of a bill to restart Ohio wind development.



A July Ohio Power Siting Board hearing on the Icebreaker wind project created a telling flashpoint in the battle over Ohio's energy future. Approximately 200 people turned out to be heard, with those in favor of the 20.7 MW project outnumbering opponents 7 to 1. However, an August 5th Cleveland Plain Dealer article revealed that opponents had been backed by Murray Energy, the nation's largest privately held coal company and a potential Icebreaker competitor. Murray Energy lacked many legal means to directly challenge the nation's first proposed freshwater wind farm, so they surreptitiously bankrolled legal representation for two wealthy Bratenahl residents who intervened in the siting process to stop or slow it down. **Ohio Citizen Action testified in favor of Icebreaker on behalf of our approximately 15,000 members living in Northeast Ohio.** We expect the board to rule in early 2019.

Consumer Rights

In Spring, we learned that the work we and our allies did to prevent fixed electric rate increases requested by American Electric Power (AEP) and Duke Energy in 2015 and 2016 was successful – **a victory that saves AEP customers \$120 and Duke customers \$192 per year.** Similarly, we learned in June that Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) customers would only pay a fixed electric rate increase to \$7/mo. instead of the \$13/mo. requested by the utility. While we opposed any increase at all, the figure approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) brought DP&L customers' fixed rate charge more in line with what other utilities charge.

We testified against the DP&L rate increase in May and also against a gas fixed rate increase requested by Vectren, which if enacted, would affect some of the same customers. Ohio Citizen Action Executive Director, Rachael Belz, was featured in local media about the hearing.



In December, we had the rare opportunity to testify *in favor* of a proposal at the PUCO, at a hearing to determine the need for 900 MW of renewable energy projects pledged by AEP. We also worked to turn out as many of our members and allies as possible, as approval of AEP's plan could impact renewable energy development for a decade or more. **AEP customers responded with so much enthusiasm that 170 people attended the hearing and 56 testified in favor of more wind and solar projects from AEP, even though the more-than-two-hour hearing took place on a workday during business hours.**

Throughout the year, **3,602 members and allies made official comments to the PUCO opposing fixed rate increases.**

Civic Engagement

While Ohio Citizen Action doesn't endorse candidates, we understand that many members and allies appreciate unbiased resources for making decisions in elections. Our **Candidate Education Project** included tools for voters to choose our next governor, suggestions for shaping the next administration's environmental policy and encouragement for clean energy voters to go to the polls.

For the third consecutive year, we identified and scored clean energy voters who consider energy issues when voting, through our door-to-door field canvass. People scored themselves on a scale of 1 – 5, with one being most likely to consider clean energy when voting. This year, we **scored 14,452 people, of whom 12,461 turned out to be registered voters**. In October, our professional phone canvassers **urged those who scored themselves most likely to consider energy issues when voting to turn out for the November 6 election**.

We also **prepared an online voter guide** for people interested in researching the resumes, campaign contributors, voting records and energy platforms of the two major candidates for governor. **We distributed 2,220 abridged versions of the voter guide directly to our members**.



Finally, we **collaborated with 12 other environmental and conservation groups to create Project 2022**, a series of in-depth environmental recommendations for the new governor. Through our Tracker Project, we converted the recommendations into questions **and recruited 22 volunteers to attend appearances by the candidates to ask the questions**. Later, we **recorded 24 video "postcards"**

featuring environmental questions of people throughout the state for the gubernatorial candidates **and posted them on our website and social media** during early voting. This represented our first effort to pair offline efforts with an online engagement strategy and yielded 1,519 Facebook views and 92 YouTube views.

Organizational News

- **During the year, our field canvassers knocked on 104,337 doors, spoke to 57,252 people, collected 18,872 petition signatures and accepted 9,839 contributions. Our phone canvassers followed up with members in 12,673 conversations, collected 2,978 contributions and transferred 2,497 calls directly to decision makers on our campaigns.**



- In February, we **mailed our 2017 year-in-review report to major donors**, kicking off a new commitment to better communicate with our most generous members.
- In March, we joined with Earthjustice, Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, California Communities Against Toxics and the Environmental Integrity Project to **sue U.S. EPA** over plans to allow polluters to switch off existing pollution controls to maximize profits.
- In May, we welcomed long-time member **Bob Park to the Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund board**.
- In June, we **delivered 2,435 post cards** urging the Ohio Senate to **fix wind setbacks** to senators whose constituents we canvassed over two weeks.
- In September, long-time member **Joshua Sands joined the Ohio Citizen Action board** and we held our annual **board retreat** in Cincinnati.

- In October, we kicked off the **Metzenbaum Society Giving Circle** with a Cincinnati event at the clean-energy-showcase home of member Scott Knox. Metzenbaum Society Giving Circle members support our mission with a gift of \$1,000 or more within a year.



(L to R) Host Scott Knox, Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund board member Heather Zoller and Metzenbaum Society members Cindy and Jim Briggs.

- In November, on the first day of the lame duck legislative session, we held a **rally in** Senate President Larry Obhof's home town of **Medina** to challenge him to bring legislation fixing wind setbacks to a vote before the close of the session.
- Also in November, we held our **Cleveland area Metzenbaum Society kickoff event** at the home of Judy Rosman. Metzenbaum Society members Rick and Annie Hubbard co-hosted the event, which was attended by two of the late senator's daughters.



(L to R) Co-hosts Richard and Annie Hubbard, Shelley Metzenbaum, Susan Metzenbaum Hyatt, host Judy Rosman and former Ohio Citizen Action Executive Director Sandy Buchanan proudly display their Metzenbaum Society lapel pins.

2018 BOARD AND STAFF

OHIO CITIZEN ACTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Anne Wise, M.D. (Cleveland) *President*; Ann Knotek (Cleveland) *Secretary/Treasurer*; Thomas Ferguson (Columbus); Joshua Sands (Cincinnati); Nancy Sullivan (Cincinnati); and Carla Walker (Cincinnati).

OHIO CITIZEN ACTION SENIOR STAFF: Rachael Belz (Executive Director); Melissa English (Deputy Director); Lynn Scheerhorn (Financial Director); Don Wolcott (Regional Canvass Director); Curt Moultime (Regional Field Canvass Director); Stephen Gabor (Phone Canvass Director); Jessica Smith-Szabo (Cleveland Field Canvass Director); Angela Oster (Digital Communications Director); Chris Young (Database Manager); Mark Biszantz (Membership Development Coordinator); Anastazia Vanisko (Cleveland Program Assistant).

OHIO CITIZEN ACTION EDUCATION FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS Dick Wittberg (Marietta) *President*; Matthew Currie (Dayton) *Secretary/Treasurer*; Brooke Smith (Cincinnati); Bob Park (Cincinnati); and Heather Zoller (Cincinnati).

Ohio Citizen Action Education Fund is the 501 c 3 education and research affiliate of Ohio Citizen Action. Its Executive Director is Melissa English.



The 2018 Ohio Citizen Action and Ohio Citizen Action boards. (L to R) Matt Currie, Heather Zoller, Nancy Sullivan, Anne Wise (seated on floor), Carla Walker, Tommy Ferguson, Dick Wittberg, Bob Park and Ann Knotek. Not pictured are Brooke Smith and Joshua Sands.

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