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December 9, 2016

The Honorable John Kasich
Office of the Governor
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Request to Veto Sub. H.B. 554

Dear Governor Kasich:

On behalf of our statewide, educational non-profit, Green Energy Ohio (GEO), I respectfully ask you to veto Sub. House Bill 554. This measure will continue to hamper our state's progress to deploy renewable energy and energy efficiency to create jobs, reduce the carbon levels and improve the quality of life for all Ohioans. We join many others in the clean energy industry who know this legislation will create business uncertainty with unenforceable "goals" and unclear market signals that will discourage investment.

Based on your public statements about potentially vetoing a legislative action that does not move Ohio forward on clean energy development, as Governor, your leadership in this matter represents the best hope to advance Ohio green energy for millions of Ohioans as well as the nearly 400 GEO members including our 72 clean energy business members.

Our GEO members know a lot about Ohio's growing solar, wind and related clean energy developments because their homes, businesses and public places have made it a reality. We recall how little investment was made in these technologies before enactment of SB 221 in May, 2008. During the past 13 years, GEO tours of homes, farms, businesses, schools and community places have showcased over 900 sites in 66 counties. Our tours reflect the manufacturing, construction, distribution, retail businesses and trained workers who deploy green energy every day and who have voiced opposition to H.B. 554. GEO has documented these success stories in 36 editions of our quarterly magazine since 2008.

As you know, I served 20 years in Ohio state government. I began in 1973 as a legislative liaison in Governor Jack Gilligan's Office, then several years as a hearing examiner and legislative liaison at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and finally over 16 years as Ohio's first Consumers' Counsel from 1977 to 1993.

I know how energy works in Ohio. I have been inside coal and nuclear power plants, three underground mines, a gas pipeline compressor station, on a hydraulic fracking big rig, inside hydroelectric dams, wind farms, utility-scale solar arrays and in telephone central offices, and private water plants. My state service led to my appointment to three Secretary of Energy Advisory Boards under Presidents Carter, H.W. Bush and Clinton.

After leaving state government from 1994 to 2002, I traveled to other state capitols as an energy consultant and made presentations to a dozen state legislatures and a number of others on the topics of electric industry restructuring and the nascent potential of solar electricity.

In 2001, I became Executive Director of Green Energy Ohio or GEO. Today our state's energy market makes clear that clean energy technology has the potential to grow rapidly across Ohio in concert with the shale gas development. We were pleased to report in our Summer 2016 *GEO News Magazine* that our statewide solar survey shows that solar energy is now at work in all 88 Ohio Counties. On a national basis, a solar array is being installed every two and a half minutes.

Our Summer magazine edition also documents the number of solar installations and energy capacity of solar by county. Ohio had 132.5 megawatts (MW) of solar installed as of this May, including 25 large-scale solar installations we describe in detail on roofs and ground mounted to serve electric utilities, factories, schools and zoos and other Ohio load centers. This is an immense growth in solar electric or photovoltaic installations in Ohio. For example, when GEO was the local host for the National Solar Conference in July 2007 attended by 5,000 people in downtown Cleveland, Ohio had less than 1 MW of installation solar in the entire state!

Ohio can continue to discourage investment in solar and wind technologies, but the technologies will not be stopped by legislative edicts. Solar and wind costs are continuing to decrease. The real damage to Ohio is its relative position to other states that are growing renewable energy faster by encouraging investment and new jobs.

I am more confident than ever before that Ohioans will continue to choose renewable energy. I ask you to restore the proven benefits of SB 221 and reasonable wind farm property setbacks to help make Ohio a leader in renewable energy.

Your 2011 energy policy pillars on renewable energy and energy efficiency certainly envisioned a more proactive green energy policy than the regressive legislation before you.

Finally, Governor, three decades ago when you were a State Senator and I was Ohio Consumers' Counsel, I appreciated your support and your understanding of public utility monopolies. You probably heard me say more than once that the public interest policy issue is whether the State of Ohio controls the utility monopolies or the utility monopolies control the State of Ohio. A balancing of private and monopoly interests with the public interest is at stake now in Sub. S.B. 554. Your leadership in keeping Ohio a leader in clean energy is needed now more than ever.

Sincerely,

William A. Spratley
Executive Director