



# ***Environmental Advisory Board***

## **Meeting Agenda**

June 24, 2026, 3:00 P.M.

Centennial II, Griesel Conference Room, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor

805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Virtual Attendance through Microsoft Teams

### **Order of Business**

**I. Public Comment**

**II. Call to Order**

**III. Administrative Action\***

- Approval of May 27, 2026 – Meeting minutes

**IV. Office of Environment and Sustainability Comments**

- Energy Benchmarking and Building Performance Standard presentation
- OES fellows introductions

**V. Information/Updates**

- Conversation with Councilmember Meeka Owens and plan to meet with Councilmember Ryan James – Dave Schmitt and Ericka Copeland
- Overview of Canoes and Conversations event – Dave Schmitt

**VI. Items for Vote\***

- None

**VII. Open Discussion**

- Future topics and policies to pursue

**VIII. Presentations**

- City's Multi-family recycling program - Bob Gedert
- House Bill 303 - Nathan Alley

**IX. Next Meeting**

- The next EAB meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 29, 2026, at 3:00 PM.

**X. Adjournment**

**Agenda Packet Materials:**

- Draft meeting minutes from 05/27/2026
- GCP Action Policy Aspects document
- Multi-Family Recycling Pilot Presentation
- Sample Resolution
- House Bill 303 Explanation Document

# Environmental Advisory Board

## Minutes of May 27, 2026

### Members Present:

- **In Person:** Briana Mazzolini-Blanchard; Dave Schmitt; Douglas Walton; Kylie Johnson; Monica Perdomo;
- **Virtual:** Andrew Musgrave; Carla Walker; Ericka Copeland; Megan O’Keefe; Michael Roman; Nathan Alley; Sarah Kent; Susan Sprigg; Yasmine Allen

**Members Absent:** Ashlee Young; Emmy Schroeder; Nayana Shah; Van Sullivan

**Staff Present:** Oliver Kroner; Amanda Testerman; Erin Kabel; Lauren Clark; Howard Miller

**Meeting:** A meeting of the Environmental Advisory Board was held on May 27, 2026, at 3:00 PM at Centennial II Griesel Conference Room, 805 Central Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

### Meeting Agenda:

- I. **Public Comment**
- II. **Call to Order at 3:09 PM**
- III. **Administrative Action\***
  - Approval of April 29, 2026 – Meeting minutes
- IV. **Office of Environment & Sustainability Comments- Ollie Kroner and Erin Kabel**
  - Leveraged Fund Update- Erin Kabel
- V. **Information/Updates**
  - Motion for becoming Welcoming City has advanced- Dave Schmitt
  - Two new Lead Gold Certified Homes in South Cumminsville- Dave Schmitt
  - Mill Creek Alliance Canoes & Coffees June 6, 2026- Dave Schmitt
  - Midwest Regional Sustainability Summit tickets are available- Kylie Johnson
  - Fusion- June 11<sup>th</sup>- Monica Perdomo
- VI. **Items for Vote\***
  - None
- VII. **Open Discussion**
  - Meeting topics from board members
    - Cincinnati Zoo considering AI use discussion- Megan O’Keefe
    - Pause on building Data Centers until end of 2026, plans after the pause? - Sarah Kent
    - Sierra Club lobbying at Ohio State House regarding data centers – Nathan Alley
    - Planting native plants for pollinators- Briana Mazzolini-Blanchard
    - Futures Commission Report, Environmental Updates- Kylie Johnson
    - Multifamily Recycling Presentation from Bob Gedert- Dave Schmitt
- VIII. **Presentations-**
  - **Climate Migration Readiness Plan-** Howard Miller, Lauren Clark
  - **BuildReady-** Andrew Halt, Abby Couch, Department of City Planning and Engagement
  - **Climate Migration-** Michael Roman Video [here](#)
- IX. **Next Meeting**
  - Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at 3:00 PM
- X. **Adjournment at 4:30 PM**

# GCP Actions with Policy Aspects

Focus Area	Action #	Action	Status	Status Description
Buildings & Energy	B&E.1	Improve building performance by implementing policies like benchmarking, building performance standards, or other relevant energy standards	In progress	(12/2025) - Completed four BPS stakeholder sessions during summer 2025. submitted report containing BPS recommendations to Council (3/25) The City is working with UC professor Amanda Webb and other Ohio cities on a BPS focused grant that started in January 2024. The grant is currently analyzing utility and building data. Stakeholder engagement will begin soon. (10/24) The City received a grant with the same partners to fund implementation of BPS. While the grant agreement was executed, it is unclear if the grant will move forward. (4/24) Benchmarking report provided to council.
Buildings & Energy	B&E.3	Recognize the role embodied carbon plays in the built environment and align incentive programs to encourage the reuse of existing buildings	Suggested	(12/2025) No direct action to date. BPS discussions are an effort to make existing buildings more efficient. Tax credits and abatements also encourage reuse of existing buildings.
Buildings & Energy	B&E.5	Create incentives to encourage developers to electrify new buildings or install infrastructure so buildings can easily convert to all-electric in the future	Suggested	(12/2025) No action to date. (3/2025) Federal incentives will help. Attempted to get it included in the Residential Tax Abatement Program. Commercial Tax Abatement will be up for review soon so opportunity is on the horizon.
Buildings & Energy	B&E.9	Create policies that will increase the energy efficiency of residential single and multi-family buildings in order to decrease energy poverty	In progress	(12/2025) Proposed BPS would apply to multi-family. Large multi-family are efficient. Need to address single family and 4 unit multi-family to get most gains (3/2025) The BPS grant with UC professor Amanda Webb will look at standards for large multifamily housing. There are no discussions surrounding single family homes.
City Operations	CO.6	Create policy for the procurement of sustainable goods for internal City supplies and materials informed by a city audit to develop strategic priorities	Suggested	Sustainable Fleet Policy is a working model with many challenges. Conversations happening around similar approach for Facilities. Focused on EV procurement
City Operations	CO.18	Organize facility managers to create a sustainable facility policy for new city buildings	In progress	Discussions with Facilities about approach. Revolving Loan Fund created. EECBG audits underway. Green building checklist drafted and reviewed with CMO and Facilities. KZF Masterplan for police and fire nearing completion.
Community Activation	CA.2	Build and present a case for long-term funding mechanisms that drive emissions reductions. Reallocate the resources generated to reduce disparate impacts.	In progress	Railroad sale provides funding for capital investments to improve facilities and infrastructure; Revolving Energy Loan Fund established to invest in energy savings measures and capture energy credits; Exploration of Mercantile Aggregation Program to decarbonize commercial energy load and generate revenue stream for climate work
Community Activation	CA.3	Support codification of climate justice and racial equity in City decision-making mechanisms	In progress	EAB submitted recommendations around codifying environmental justice Dec 2025; Office of Opportunity launched and new Director hired - focused on Financial Freedom Blueprint implementation; I-Team relaunched and finding their legs; Cincy OnTrack - percentage of funding by neighborhood median income tracked; GARE membership still live, but use unknown; LEED Tax Abatement restructured to offer tiers of abatement based on community socio-economic factors; Rising Fifteen localizes strategy of Justice40, being used semi-formally in Council decision-making framework
Food	F.9	<a href="#">Implement the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact related to good governance, sustainable diets &amp; nutrition, social &amp; economic equity, food production, food supply &amp; distribution and food waste</a>	In progress	Attended MUFPP Summit in October 2025 & connected with other North American cities; convening in March 2026 with other signatory cities; OES hired Consultant to do deep dive analysis on MUFPP, create dashboard of the 26 recommendations determining current status and mapping out future work. Explore potential Award submission 5/31/205 deadline; Creation of Food Contracts and Purchasing report for Council to inform policy potential related to healthy, local food. 6/2024 Brick Gardens is playing in all spaces; sustainable diets and nutrition and social & economic equity are probably focus; Food Waste Piece: CO- composting program at Camp Washington and beyond; Collaboration model? Interstate with Rust Belt; Continuing to look at network and what work is being done; developing network of FW reclamation; Support compst Production across many sites; continue making compost at Camp; Bioreactors; Hamilton COunty working related to Food Waste; NRDC suggesting potential policy changes
Mobility	M.7	Develop policies to ensure that vehicle charging infrastructure is available to all residents including those who live in multi-family buildings and in homes without driveways	In progress	Worked with Planning and one of their interns to evaluate updates to City code that will reflect need for EV charging. Zoning administrator was in the conversations and it has traction. OES working with GPI on its Charging Smart designation. Leveraging EV charging vendor and grants to bring chargers to neighborhoods that need them. Status of CFI grant in limbo but OKI grants moving forward.
Mobility	M.9	Develop policies and incentives to ensure new construction is prepared for EV charging	In progress	Worked with Planning and one of their interns to evaluate updates to City code that will reflect need for EV charging. Zoning administrator was in the conversations and it has traction. OES is working with GPI on its Charging Smart designation.

# GCP Actions with Policy Aspects

Focus Area	Action #	Action	Status	Status Description
Mobility	M.10	Continue to invest in complete streets to improve connectivity between neighborhoods	In progress	City passed a Complete Streets ordinance in November 2022. DOTE currently examining using Complete Streets principles to transform Central Parkway. Currently in final design and engineering. Published a report of complete streets related features that were installed in 2024.
Mobility	M.16	Embrace zoning reform that increases density near transit, reduces or eliminates parking requirements across the city, and minimizes the use of surface parking lots	Completed	Connected Communities passed in June of 2024. Council addressed surface parking lots in CBD. Council has expressed desire to update/amend some parts of policy.
Natural Environment	NE.4	Implement policies that protect existing trees during development efforts	Suggested	Report by Xavier Intern on options from other municipalities, example ordinances complete. Potential option for EAB to provide suggestions to committee.  Motion #202302795 passed by Council in December requesting: "the Administration supplement its process for granting easements to third parties. This supplement should include (but not limited to): detailed guidelines for community engagement and communication for easements authorizing large-scale construction or earth movement with the potential to impact neighbors, and restoration and replacement of removal of trees and vegetation."
Natural Environment	NE.8	Strengthen air emissions regulations	Suggested	Xavier intern project focused on study of municipal air regulations with comparison to see what action municipalities have taken determined there are limited actions US Cities have successfully taken. Most examples are from other countries with poorer air quality. Ohio EPA released a draft of the "Second 10-Year Maintenance Plan for the Ohio Portion of the Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Area" - this plan shows that Hamilton county is projected to meet the maintenance requirements, but only because of the projected emission decreases for on-road/mobile sources. Otherwise they have a projected increase in area VOCs and NOx emissions. On/road mobile source data came from OKI. NY using building performance focused on GHG emissions~energy use. This is separate from air permitting requirements.
Natural Environment	NE.13	Implement policies which promote and protect public greenspaces in new developments	Suggested	
Natural Environment	NE.15	Implement policies that restrict development in forested and/or biodiverse areas	Suggested	Report by Xavier intern on options from other municipalities, example ordinances complete. Potential option for EAB to provide suggestions to committee.
Resilience & Climate Adaptation	R.1	Incentivize green infrastructure projects in communities with extreme heat and flood vulnerabilities	In progress	KCB includes green infrastructure elements in all of their greenspaces OES created 1-pager and infographic on updated website. FUSE climate resilience project included aspects of this action including listening tour, landscape analysis, and grant support. Hamilton County Conservation District has started the 2025-2030 long term strategic plan, which has a watershed focus area. OES was invited to participate in a planning workshop. MSD, SMU, MCA, Parks, OKI, Hamilton County Conservation District, and many others highlighted in FUSE listening tour report.
Resilience & Climate Adaptation	R.8	Continue to implement affordable and mixed-income housing strategies to stabilize communities	In progress	Connected Communities Zoning Reform Ordinance Passed 6/5/2024. Continue supporting repurposing of industrial and commercial office space to residential land use including through brownfield redevelopment. This is being funded in part through state and federal brownfield grants, tax credits, tax incentive financing, opportunity zones. Continued to foster relationship with orgs including CMHA, the Port, and DCED among others. Studies recently completed applicable to this action include the City's Financial Blueprint and the City's Futures Commission Report, both of which include more detailed recommended actions. Cincinnati formally awarded Bloomberg American Sustainable Cities initiative funding in March 2024 to support a three member i-team to work with the mayor's office to address financial and climate racial inequities including a focus on affordable housing. Their work began in September 2024 with new new i-team in Fall 2025.
Resilience & Climate Adaptation	R.14	Protect landslide-prone hillsides and overland flood risk zones through land development policies, such as Low Impact Development	In progress	FEMA BRIC TA grant submitted in 2024 to address landslide area in Evanston - not awarded. FEMA BRIC PROTECT Grant for \$10 Million - awarded to DOTE. Grant project includes stabilization of 10 landslide prone areas in the City. Action item landscape analysis of existing city land development policies as administered by DOTE and B&I. City council report from DOTE & B&I on landslide in progress work (assessing, investigating, remediating, started, progress, completed).

# GCP Actions with Policy Aspects

Focus Area	Action #	Action	Status	Status Description
Zero Waste	ZW.1	Increase the number of multi-family dwellings with recycling infrastructure	In progress	Recycling Partnership Grant awarded to fund multifamily recycling pilot program. Our goal is 3000 units. So far we have 461 launched, 1312 commitments, and 889 left to recruit (802 student housing, 131 market rate).
Zero Waste	ZW.3	Require permitted public events and events held on City property use best available recycling practices and include recycling service costs in the permit fee	In progress	No progress on policy requirement, the activities listed are currently voluntary. Hamilton County already provides infrastructure (bins). 1/31/25 Rumpke Contract has been updated to allow special event management. Last Mile Food Rescue rescued 10,000 lbs of food at 11 Special events in Cincinnati in 2025 including Oktoberfest, Taste of Cincinnati, Zoo LaLa, Asian Food Festival and others. Also Hamilton County ReSource provided zero waste consulting to Cincinnati Wine Festival (80% diversion from tasting events) and Paddelfest 2025 (94.34% waste diversion) La Soupe works with the USOpen & Riverbend (outside City limits) and LMFR also does other venues outside city limits. Riverroots event had a well organized recycling program.
Zero Waste	ZW.8	Incentivize recycling and diversion innovation by increasing the cost of waste generation and disposal	In progress	Raising the cost of garbage is critical to spur investments in circular economy recycling initiatives. Pay as You Throw (PAYT) report completed by OES Intern; Hamilton County has cost estimates for necessary compost infrastructure. Hamilton County Policy committee considering tier 2 increase. This potential increase could generate about 3 million a year and fund class II aerated static pile (ASP) system as recommended by consultants. Next policy meeting is Nov. 19, 2025 and this issue is expected to be discussed
Zero Waste	ZW.14	Support funding, siting, and development of a local, large-scale Class II compost facility	In progress	CPRG Grant submission with OKI included funding for multi-scale compost facilities - not awarded; 1/29/25: HCR received USDA grant to site ClassII; OES USDA#2 grant supports Common Orchard site development to ClassII; HCR consultant working with Common Orchard for site analysis and Class II prep. Consultant Compost Evaluation and Siting report recommends 3 mid-size aerated static pile (ASP) 6 to 8 acre sites to be able to divert the amount of organics currently being landfilled. These will cost 7 to 14 million each. The Hamilton County Policy committee is discussing options as to how to site and fund this. HCR issued an RFP and will be partnering with Xavier University to apply for an Ohio EPA Community Development Grant for an in-vessel composting system. Xavier University would use the system to compost food scraps from campus dining and restaurants.
Zero Waste	ZW.17	Utilize policy and fees to discourage the use of single-use plastics including plastic bags	Suggested	On hold due to State ban; Athens v State of Ohio litigation outcome coming that will determine what we can do. Kroger reported spring of 2025 that they are implementing reusable bag pilots in locations that have bag bans. In locations where bag bans are not in place (like Cincinnati) there are not plans for pilots in place at this time
Zero Waste	ZW.18	Reduce litter and illegal dumping through public communications strategy and stronger enforcement	In progress	OES purchased 48 recycling containers for DORA Districts to assist with litter reduction; Additional 25 containers in Central Biz District to reduce litter; Council approved ordinance 729-31 on 11/15/23 allowing the city to impound a vehicle used to illegally dump trash. Two other ordinances aimed at reducing litter also got approval--Fencing vacant lots and AMENDING Section 729-7, "Setting Out Containers," to ensure the clean and safe storage of garbage containers and dumpsters. KCB reports that Don't Dump the Nati was a success in 2024. 986 vehicles dropped off 342 tons of waste resulting in a 30 percent decrease in illegal dumping hotspots. OES supported 2025 Dont Dump the Nati to allow for diversion and recycling.

# Legislative Resolution

JRS

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ - 2025

**DECLARING** the need for emergency repairs that have been made to sidewalks, sidewalk areas, curbs, and/or gutters at a variety of locations in the City and the need for levying assessments for the cost of such repairs on the abutting properties in accordance with Cincinnati Municipal Code Sections 721-149 to 721-169.

WHEREAS, Chapter 721 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code requires property owners to keep the sidewalks, sidewalk area, curbs, and gutters abutting their properties safe and in good repair; and

WHEREAS, City inspectors have documented the need for emergency sidewalk repairs adjacent to each of the properties listed in Attachment A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference (the “Properties”); and

WHEREAS, Cincinnati Municipal Code Section 721-165 authorizes the City to make emergency repairs without prior notice to the abutting property owner if necessary to provide for public safety and also to bill the owner for the cost of the work; and

WHEREAS, for the Properties, the City provided prior written notice of the emergency sidewalk conditions and the need for repairs to each property owner, which included notice that failure by an owner to permanently repair an emergency condition would result in the City performing the repair at the property owner’s cost; and

WHEREAS, under Cincinnati Municipal Code Section 721-169, if a property owner fails to pay the City’s bill for the cost of the work within thirty days, the City may levy an assessment on the abutting property for the cost of the work, which shall be collected by the County Treasurer in the same manner as real estate taxes; and

WHEREAS, by this resolution the City declares the need for emergency repairs to sidewalks, sidewalk areas, curbs, or gutters abutting the Properties and the need for the levying of an assessment, by subsequent ordinance, for the cost of the work against each such property if the property owner fails to pay the City’s bill within thirty days; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That the making of emergency repairs to the sidewalks, sidewalk areas, curbs and/or gutters abutting certain properties at certain miscellaneous locations within the City, as identified in Attachment A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, is

hereby declared necessary for public safety in accordance with Cincinnati Municipal Code Sections 721-149 through 721-169.

Section 2. That the work performed by the City shall be accomplished in accordance with plans and specifications on file in the Clerk of Council's office which are hereby approved.

Section 3. That Council finds that the City shall be responsible for two percent of the cost of the work and that the balance of the cost of the work shall be charged to the abutting property owners in the amounts shown in Attachment A hereto.

Section 4. That a property owner who fails to pay the City's bill within thirty days shall, by subsequent ordinance, have an assessment levied upon such property for the cost of the work which shall be collected by the County Treasurer.

Section 5. That if a property owner does not pay the assessment in cash and, prior to the billing statement due date, does not indicate to the Director of the City's Department of Transportation and Engineering the property owner's election to pay the assessment over three, five, or ten years, the City shall assess the property for a period of three years. The interest rate charged shall correspond to the City-adopted rates in effect at the time Council passes the assessing ordinance for the respective property. The 2025 rates are 7.29 percent for three years, 7.38 percent for five years, and 7.57 percent for ten years. Assessments not timely paid shall be certified to the County Auditor for collection by the County Treasurer in the same manner as real estate taxes are collected.

Section 6. That notice of the passage of this resolution shall be given pursuant to Chapter 729 of the Ohio Revised Code and Section 721.153 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code.

Section 7. That this legislative resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed: \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

# **Multi-Family Recycling Pilot**

## **City of Cincinnati Recycles**

### **Office of Environment and Sustainability**

**Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board**  
**June 24, 2026**

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City of Cincinnati consultant  
Multi-Family Recycling Program



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

- ▶ More than half of Cincinnati residents live in MF.
- ▶ Expanding recycling access in MF communities is a priority for the city recycling goals
- ▶ Recycling in multifamily housing looks different from curbside service.
- ▶ On-site recycling dumpsters or carts, shared containers, and in-unit bins are offered to MF



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Green Cincinnati Plan Priority Actions

- ▶ Increase recycling access to City residents
- ▶ Increase the number of multi-family dwellings with recycling infrastructure
- ▶ Minimize recycling contamination through tenant education



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Multi-Family Recycling Pilot Overview

- ▶ City launched a recycling pilot program to expand recycling access to multifamily units
- ▶ Grant support from The Recycling Partnership
- ▶ City pilot places recycling dumpsters or carts directly at multifamily properties
- ▶ Provide once-a-week collection service, increasing service as needed
- ▶ Provides free in-unit bins
- ▶ Provide educational materials on-site



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## City of Cincinnati Role

- ▶ Collect data through routine assessments and quarterly waste audits.
- ▶ City coordinates with the waste hauler
- ▶ Conducts on-site walkthroughs and waste audits
- ▶ Provides ongoing support to address any on-site challenges.



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## What can be recycled

### PAPER



*Flatten cardboard and remove plastic packing material*

### GLASS BOTTLES & JARS



*Detach lid & place in cart loose.*

### PLASTICS

**Bottles, jugs, tubs & cups**



*Reattach lid.  
Yogurt and fruit cups OK.*

### CARTONS



*Remove caps and straws.*

### METAL CANS



*Metal lids OK.*



### DON'T RECYCLE THESE

- Batteries
- Electronics
- Scrap Metal/Pots & Pans
- Clothing & Textiles



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Property Management Role

- ▶ Designate space for the recycling dumpster or recycling carts
- ▶ Provide copies of monthly garbage bills prior to the pilot, during the pilot period, and after
- ▶ Allow program staff access to dumpsters for audit photos
- ▶ Allow access to common areas for posting educational materials



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Property Management Role

- ▶ Monitor dumpster usage regularly, reporting to City staff any overflows or excess airspace
- ▶ Day of Service monitoring: reporting missed service
- ▶ Participate in a stakeholder meeting to share experiences and feedback about the pilot.
- ▶ Collaborate with project partners to develop and implement additional engagement and education



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Tenant Support

- ▶ Apartment internal recycling bins
  - ▶ Opt-in or automatic bin delivery
- ▶ Tenant Education
  - ▶ Door hangers
  - ▶ Education flyers
  - ▶ Community Meetings
- ▶ Tenant Surveys



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## By the Numbers

- ▶ Number of Apartment Complexes in Pilot: **22**
- ▶ Number of Apartment Management Firms: **12**
- ▶ Number of Units in Pilot: **2,473**
- ▶ Number of indoor recycling bins requested: **931**
- ▶ Estimated Recycling Diversion (range): **5% - 25%**
- ▶ Amount Recycled: **10 tons in April**
- ▶ Estimated Contamination Rate (range): **20% - 5%**



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

## Next Steps

- ▶ Continued dumpster deployment and collection
- ▶ Continued participant, diversion, and contaminant monitoring
- ▶ Multi-Family Manager/Owner Stakeholder Meetings
- ▶ Community Stakeholder Meetings
- ▶ Tenant Stakeholder Meetings
- ▶ Prepare report of findings
- ▶ Prepare policy recommendations
- ▶ Present findings and recommendations to EAB



# Cincinnati Multi-Family Recycling Pilot

*”Any waste as an output from a business is an operational inefficiency.”*

Buckminster Fuller

## ▶ Contacts:

- ▶ Bob Gedert at [robert.gedert@gmail.com](mailto:robert.gedert@gmail.com)
- ▶ Sue Magness at [sue.magness@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:sue.magness@cincinnati-oh.gov)

# House Bill 303

## What is community energy

House Bill 303, introduced by co-sponsors Representatives Jim Hoops and Sharon Ray, establishes Ohio's first community energy pilot program to develop small-scale, locally generated power sources, including solar, biomass, natural gas, and other technologies. Customers can subscribe to these community projects and receive credits on their monthly electricity bills, providing access to affordable, reliable energy for all Ohioans, including renters. The bill includes provisions for program evaluation, consumer protections, and a focus on distressed sites and rooftops to strengthen the state's energy grid, save customers money, and improve reliability.



### KEY POINTS OF HOUSE BILL 303

House Bill 303 would allow residents and businesses to subscribe to shared energy facilities located elsewhere in their region. The Community Energy program is a pilot initiative, ensuring a measured approach with a planned review by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) in four years to assess its effectiveness and impact.

The diverse energy mix recognized within the community energy program means that solar, hydro, biomass, natural gas and other sources all have a role to play in strengthening Ohio's energy resilience. HB 303 is the diverse energy mix recognized within the Community Energy program.

#### Key provisions include:

- A pilot program with 1,500 MW of generation, enough electricity to power 300,000 to 400,000 homes.
- A provision that makes use of underutilized land by encouraging energy projects on brownfields and former industrial sites. The pilot program would provide for 1,000 MW of general capacity and 500 MW reserved for distressed sites and commercial rooftops.
- No credit checks, upfront fees, or penalties if you need to cancel.
- Clear rules for how utilities credit subscribers for solar energy and limits on extra fees.
- Subscribers can only join solar projects in their own county or neighboring counties.
- No single subscriber can own more than 40% of a project, keeping it affordable for regular families.



### WHY HOUSE BILL 303 IS NECESSARY

#### Price increases

- Electricity prices are currently at historic high rates and are increasing.
- With energy prices already high and electricity demand rising, we should be producing more community energy, not creating a shortage by killing the energy source that are cheapest and fastest to build.
- In June 2025, Ohioans saw a 26% increase on their electricity bills.
- As a result of the latest PJM Interconnection capacity auction, by summer 2026 electricity prices will increase by up to an additional 5%.

## Supply and demand

- U.S. electricity demand is expected to [grow 25% by 2030 and 78% by 2050](#) from 2023 levels.
- [Energy demand is growing faster than our energy supply](#). In 2027/28, PJM Interconnection will most likely be below its reliability requirements which increases the chance of rolling blackouts and continued price increases. Simply put – by 2027 PJM risks not having enough power to meet the energy demand.
- PJM has 3,000 new energy projects stuck waiting for PJM’s approval. It’s critical that we find ways to supply energy now, and community energy provides the perfect opportunity.
- Community energy projects bypass the PJM Interconnection because the size of the projects is smaller and the energy can become immediately distributed which helps develop reliable energy.

## Reliability and Affordability

- The fastest and cheapest power to bring [online is renewable energy](#).
- Homegrown renewable energy is more affordable every day, offering a cost-effective solution for electricity. (<https://www.lazard.com/media/xemfey0k/lazards-lcoeplus-june-2024- vf.pdf>)
- Renewable energy paired with battery storage keeps the lights on during extreme weather and emergencies, such as high-temperatures and winter storms, and prevents blackouts.



## STRENGTHS OF HOUSE BILL 303

Ohio is facing increasing energy demand, and while there is no single silver bullet, community energy programs under House Bill 303 present a fast, efficient, and cost-effective tool to help meet that demand. Community Energy can be deployed quickly on the distribution side, providing localized power generation that eases strain on the grid and increases resilience.

This strengthens Ohio’s energy independence, ensuring that we are producing more of our power locally instead of relying on out-of-state generation. House Bill 303 provides a framework for expanding access to local, reliable, and affordable energy.