Ohio’s HB 201 faces scrutiny as last-minute, pro-utility amendment raises concerns
DeWine still has time to veto this unvetted giveaway

Governor DeWine has until December 29 to veto House Bill 201, which was introduced to prevent Ohio from adopting California’s emissions standards and prohibit local jurisdictions from restricting the use or sale of a vehicle based on its fuel source. The version of the bill awaiting DeWine’s signature, however, would enable natural gas companies to shift more costs onto consumers, thanks to a pro-utility amendment pushed through at the last minute.

Lawmakers – and the public – had less than 48 hours to review the change before HB 201 was finalized for DeWine’s signature. Although HB 201 moved through the House Transportation Committee with little resistance from June through December, the amendment favoring private natural gas companies was introduced and passed over the span of just two days. Our recent blog covers the details of HB 201 as it was introduced, the abrupt amendment and its questionable timeline.

Considering Ohio’s history of corrupt energy policy, this brazen attempt to slip a pro-utility amendment in at the expense of everyday Ohioans is an affront to the democratic process – and a commonly used strategy for Ohio’s utilities. Private utility companies have enjoyed a lack of accountability to their customers for far too long – and Ohio’s legislature has yet to provide any meaningful incentives for them to do so. While we shouldn’t count on seeing any level of accountability from the utilities any time soon, we should expect more from our legislators. It’s time we urge lawmakers to put the needs of our communities before the private interests of fossil fuel-reliant utility companies.

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