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Testimony in Support of House Bill 371
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Policy Matters Ohio
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Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Wendy Patton and I am the policy liaison in the Columbus office of Policy Matters Ohio. Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan research institute focused on issues that affect low- and middle-income Ohioans. My testimony today reflects the work we do with the Apollo Alliance, a non-partisan, national organization which is dedicated to building a broad-based constituency in support of a sustainable and clean energy economy that will create good jobs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and create cleaner and healthier communities. Thank you for hearing this testimony.

Mr. Chairman, we applaud the effort and interest in creating a Fuel Production Task Force in Ohio. It is through such such forums that opportunities become possibilities and possibilities become part of an enhanced economy.

We want to emphasize three ways in which this Task Force could study ways to broaden opportunities for fuel production in Ohio, beyond the traditional energy realms of petroleum and coal. We respectfully suggest that the Task Force include representatives from renewable energy sources and experts in energy efficiency as well as representatives from the sectors named in the bill.

Broadening the scope of the task force stands to benefit Ohio in three key ways. One is job creation. Ohio has good industrial infrastructure for production of component parts for the renewable energy production sectors. In our detailed report, which I have provided for each of you, we find that more than 20,000 jobs can be created across the state in manufacturing such parts. The potential job gains exceed all but three other states, and include 13,000 jobs from wind investment, 6,000 from solar, 1,800 from geothermal, and 1,800 from biomass. The jobs are spread throughout the state as 85 of the 88 counties in Ohio have one or more firms that currently manufacture products that could be used in renewable energy production. These jobs would be created if there were state and national policies implemented to move energy supply for new growth in energy demand toward renewable sources. This task force could be the body that recommends such policies for the state of Ohio and even works with legislators in other states to encourage them to implement policies that promote an expansion of renewable energy supply.

I attached to your copy of our report on this matter projected jobs in renewable energy production component parts manufacture in your county or counties. While there are no names of companies provided, you probably know the companies that would benefit by the product listed by NICS code on the report.

Second, in addition to manufacturing parts for expanding renewable energy production across the nation, Ohio can produce renewable energy itself, primarily through biomass and wind power, which would add jobs, bring money into the economy, and add to the domestic energy supply. Green Energy Ohio has found extremely promising results from a wind turbine set offshore of Lake Erie, not to mention the wind turbines that have well exceeded expectations in Bowling Green. The agricultural parts of Ohio would also benefit greatly from biomass use.

Third, fuel production is extremely important but can only succeed with energy efficiency measures, specifically better construction of buildings. We therefore recommend that the taskforce look at efficiency options as well as current fuel production. More than half of the fuel and energy usage in the country comes from buildings. Ohio, like the rest of the nation, must become more efficient in its energy use in addition to producing better fuel. Investing and understanding high performance building principles such as building placement, window types, natural light use, and lighting controls can save millions of dollars in energy costs. The construction and transportation for this effort could also be localized to create jobs.

In sum, we applaud Representative Buehrer for introducing House Bill 371 to create the Fuel Production Task Force. We respectfully ask the Chair, the Representative, and the members of the committee to consider broadening its scope and composition to capture the spectrum of opportunities for job creation and energy savings for Ohio in the evolving national focus on domestic energy supply.