



**Alternative Energy Committee**  
**The Ohio House of Representatives, 128th General Assembly**  
**Hearing on H.B. 301 – December 8, 2009 –**  
**Testimony of Shanelle Smith, Ohio Apollo Alliance**

Chairperson Celeste, Vice Chairperson Phillips, Ranking minority member Snitchler, and members of the Committee: My name is Shanelle Smith, and I am the Ohio Coordinator for the Apollo Alliance, a coalition of labor, environmental, community, and business leaders.

My work centers around advocating for policies to grow the clean energy economy and create good green jobs here in Ohio.

Ohio's workers face daunting challenges – and tremendous opportunities. Since the last recession in 2001, hundreds of thousands of Ohioans have lost their jobs in traditionally “blue-collar” occupations like manufacturing, construction, operations and maintenance. Since December of last year, Ohio has lost 159,000 jobs, including 89,000 manufacturing and 11,000 construction jobs. This recent job loss is on top of all the jobs we've lost since the last recession from which Ohio never recovered. Since 2001, Ohio has lost nearly 500,000 jobs, including 384,000 manufacturing and 58,000 construction jobs, jobs in skilled trades that tend to pay higher wages and come with better benefits than others. For public workers, shrinking state and municipal budgets and privatization have eroded job security. At the same time, rising food and fuel prices, skyrocketing healthcare costs, and the foreclosure crisis have all made it difficult for workers to support their families.

See, my mom is one of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been affected by the collapse of the American automotive industry. For over 25 years, my mother worked at General Motors Power train in Toledo, earning a wage that allowed her to provide a decent home for her family and send her daughters to college. Despite being a hard and devoted worker, she was laid off and faces an uncertain future. And that's why I'm here today. Many Ohioans are in the same predicament as my mom. What do you do if you're middle-aged, don't have a college degree, and suddenly find yourself without a job in this country? Nobody wants to find themselves in that position, but



fortunately there's a light at the end of the tunnel for our family and others like us. That light is being powered by clean energy and the Advanced Energy Fund can help make that light brighter.

The promise of the new “green economy” offers hope to both public and private sector workers. “Green-collar” jobs are on the rise across many sectors, from manufacturing workers building wind turbines and geothermal plants, to others working to install and maintain them on our homes, businesses, and schools; to utility workers stringing new transmission lines and retrofitting power plants; to construction workers doing large-scale retrofits in the residential and commercial sectors; to a whole host of public sector jobs operating and maintaining public buildings, municipal waste sites, recycling plants and parks. These jobs won't replace every manufacturing job lost in Ohio, but they offer one promising growth area for the future of Ohio's economy.

However, we must ensure these new jobs are high-quality, family-supporting jobs with benefits. Done right, public investments and policies to grow the green economy can also help rebuild America's middle class. I am here today as the organizer of the Ohio Apollo Alliance., a broad coalition of labor, business, environmental, and community leaders promoting bold federal, state and local investments that serve the twin goals of promoting clean energy and good jobs. We support the expansion and extension of the Advanced Energy Fund, but strongly encourage you to include language ensuring the work goes to employers paying decent wages, ensure those doing the work are properly certified to do the work right, and that the funds are used in a way that promotes the creation of training opportunities. Green projects are the best opportunity for low-skilled workers to enhance their skills and therefore represent an opportunity to create green pathways out of poverty.

Ohio's Advanced Energy Fund can complement our renewable portfolio and energy efficiency standards by driving demand for clean energy, if we use these incentives in a strategic way to creates the most bang for our buck, emphasizing good jobs and energy independence. We are currently spending nearly \$50 billion to fuel our economy, mostly with polluting fossil fuels purchased outside the state. We purchase two-thirds of our coal, 89 percent of



our natural gas, and 98 percent of the oil and petroleum products from out of state or out of the country. Rather than sending billion of dollars out of Ohio each year for conventional polluting fossil fuels, we should expand our clean energy fund to make our economy more energy independent. Without a fund to support our own domestic manufacturers, policies that create new clean energy demand could easily lead to more imports.

That's why the Ohio Apollo Alliance supports H.B. 301, to expand and extend the Advanced Energy Fund, and use it to encourage both the supply and demand of alternative energy in Ohio, for energy improvements and renewable energy systems, and to promote green jobs that are good jobs.

But we would also like to see the following provisions included in the legislation to ensure those green jobs are good jobs and that we are using public funds to promote green pathways out of poverty:

1. Use Advanced Energy Fund resources to build skills and experience of entry- level and low-income workers by giving preference to projects using a portion of the Advanced Energy Fund to support on-the-job training of workers. Advanced energy funds could also be used to expand pre-apprenticeship skills enhancement programs for populations historically underrepresented in the building trades.
2. Advanced Energy Fund projects should be used in a way that encourages employers to hire low-income and entry-level workers: Give preference or award extra points to projects where low-income individuals are hired and complete a defined number of work hours on the project.
3. Give preference to projects that make use of apprentices.
4. Give preference to responsible contractors who pay living wages that can support a family.

Please help make the clean energy economy a reality by supporting the expansion of the Advanced Energy Fund. If we are going to make sure our



parents and grandparents can retire in comfort and that the next generation of American workers is in a position to earn decent living wage salaries, we need to make the transition to clean and efficient energy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I'll be happy to answer any questions.