

Testimony before the Indiana Senate Utilities Committee (Feb. 27, 2020)

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Jesse Kharbanda, Executive Director of the Hoosier Environmental Council

We appreciate amendments 6 and 8. They reflect the fact that Chairman Merritt and other Senators have been hearing from a broad diversity of stakeholders and perceiving considerable public opposition. The amendments are better for ratepayers and they codify responsible practices for energy resource planning - which prevents the kind of rash decision making that concerns some of the members of this Committee. **Our organization does worry about the bill reverting to an earlier version through the conference committee process.**

A version of the bill that is more akin to the House bill 1.) *could, if the sunset provision in the bill were delayed or repealed, raise electricity rates;* when you are setting up a new regulatory review process, you risk slowing coal plant retirements *in the event that the sunset date of this bill gets delayed or removed and 2.) send a negative signal to clean energy developers.* Delaying those retirements could affect clean energy investor interest at a time when there are 4.3 more jobs in renewable energy than there are in coal mining in Indiana.

Rather than seeing HB 1414 become law, we have three specific and constructive recommendations for the Chairman and this Committee, and for Rep. Soliday:

1. **Invite officials from Midwestern states that are ahead of our state in terms of the coal-to-clean energy transition to brief lawmakers:**
 - In Indiana, we get 6% of our electricity from renewables. In Iowa (37%), KS (36%), OK (32%), SD (30%), ND (27%)
 - All of these other states have lower costs of energy per kilowatt-hour and solid electric reliability.

2. **Support increased appropriations for job training and for research that is targeted to coal-dependent areas of Indiana and to communities harmed by coal pollution.**
 - We are thankful to the coal miners and coal plant workers here and appreciate all they have done to power Indiana's economy. But according to the IURC's own 2019 report, of the 28 units that have retired, 24 of the 28 were over 50 years old - their natural operational life.
 - The idea we're suggesting is that increased dollars could be earmarked to help coal miners in SW Indiana, communities with coal plant workers¹, and

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communities that have been hurt by the impacts of coal-fired generation to get increased training dollars to get into high paying jobs in sectors like advanced manufacturing.

- Research dollars could be directed to places like Indiana State University, University of Southern Indiana, and University of Evansville to flesh out alternatives to coal as bases of employment.

3. **Write a letter to the Governor** urging him to direct the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to make a concerted effort to attract clean energy companies into former coal mining areas, areas with large numbers of coal workers (that could be displaced), and areas that have been harmed by coal pollution.

Once again, rather than seeing HB 1414 become law, we urge you to consider the three specific constructive recommendations for the Chairman and this Committee and for Rep. Soliday.

Thank you.