Statement of Public Policy Positions 2021-2022

Green Energy Ohio (GEO) is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable energy policies, technologies, and practices through education, outreach, and advocacy.

Now in its 21st year, GEO conducts educational public outreach on all forms of renewable energy and provides practical policy advice to private and public decision makers. Backed by solid community-based support, GEO mobilizes resources across Ohio with diverse partners joining together in groundbreaking renewable energy, transportation and energy efficiency projects. GEO has designed this document to reflect our core principles while, at the same time, leaving room for greater detail and allowing for flexibility. We believe that this is the best approach to policymaking, coalition-building, and ensuring that Ohio moves forward on clean energy issues.

The policy process is dynamic and fluid; it can be accelerated or prolonged. External factors exert a significant influence – technological advances, economic pressures, and international events. Changes in the political landscape create an atmosphere of unpredictability. At the same time, businesses require statutory and regulatory certainty to make sound investment decisions. Companies that produce clean energy, as well as companies that are committed to using clean energy, will site their facilities and invest in states that demonstrate consistent support and provide a stable legislative and regulatory environment.

GEO supports public accountability in energy and regulatory policy decision making. Utility laws and energy regulatory policies should be made openly, lawfully, and in the public interest. Energy policies must protect Ohio consumers, public health, the environment, and promote sustainability.

GEO supports a collaborative policy process where government, utilities, energy service providers, research and educational institutions, advocacy groups, businesses and trade associations, and community stakeholders share strategies and resources to help all consumers enhance sustainability and control energy costs.

GEO supports a diversified power generation and delivery system through:

- The development of renewable generation by communities wanting to invest in renewable resources, companies wanting to expand their presence and commitment to commercial and industrial sustainability in Ohio, and utilities wanting to diversify their energy generation portfolios.
- Reasonable statewide siting policies demonstrated to be effective in locating renewable energy developments in a safe and responsible manner.
- Increased electrical generation capacity and co-generation efficiency by updating existing generating facilities, and establishing distributed generation featuring cleaner fuels.
- The establishment of renewable energy cooperatives for investing in, purchasing, aggregating, or sharing products allowing delivery of renewable energy to consumers.
- Local, state and federal government incentives that improve the abilities of investor-owned, municipal and cooperative utilities, as well as competitive service providers, to enhance energy delivery.
- Continued investment in wind farms that provide power, stimulate economic development, and contribute to the financial success of local landowners and communities.
- Development of offshore wind projects in Lake Erie as viable renewable power sources.
- Expansion of residential and community solar opportunities.
- Investment in utility-scale solar projects.
- The use of biofuels, municipal solid waste, and hydrogen from carbon-neutral feedstocks obtained in a manner that incorporates recycling, ensures natural resource conservation, lessens the release of emissions into the atmosphere, and enhances sustainability.
- The increased adoption of electric vehicles (EV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV). This includes policies that support infrastructure expansion, equitable fee structures, and innovation that advances the clean transportation sector.
- Research and development on energy storage technologies and battery applications that will extend the availability of intermittent power sources, improve power supply, reliability, and resiliency.
- Upgraded transmission and distribution systems and microgrid development to support integration of renewable resources.

GEO supports energy efficiency and conservation through:

- Continued development of the federal Energy Star Program and similar state policies and projects that recognize manufacturers for developing energy conserving technologies.
- Elimination of the regulatory and economic barriers that inhibit the development of affordable, reliable, and safe energy efficiency practices, load management and renewable distributed generation.
- Educational programs promoting sound energy conservation and renewable energy production.
- Availability of energy audits and services to maximize savings and reduce total energy demand.
- Broader distribution of smart meters and control sensing systems that allow customers to manage their households and control their energy use, with privacy and shared data analytics. Advancement of Smart Cities strategies leading to sustainable and resilient communities.

GEO supports consumer education, outreach, and customer service through:

- Collaborative education and planning efforts among utilities, energy service providers, renewable energy businesses, and consumers, including such topics as project cost and financing, renewable energy credits, net metering, rebates, billing, and interconnection requirements.
- Education of local elected and appointed officials on the challenges and opportunities of renewable energy project development.
- Development of a consumer-friendly interconnection application process for small businesses, educational, other institutional, and residential customers.
- Access to full and transparent information on the clean energy offerings that retail electric service choice providers have on the market.
- Promotion of and access to renewable energy and energy efficiency options, and technical assistance to underserved areas of the state.

GEO supports creative financing and market development through:

- Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs and Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) to enable cities, counties, and eligible urban townships to use bonds or grants for the installation of Demand Side Management/Energy Efficiency (DSM/EE) and renewable energy generation equipment on eligible homes and businesses.
- The Ohio Development Service Agency's *Energy Loan Fund* as a means of low-cost financing to small businesses, manufacturers, nonprofits, and public entities for

improvements that reduce energy usage and associated costs, reduce fossil fuel emissions, and create or retain jobs.

- Program offerings that allow customers to repay system and installation costs through an assessment on their property taxes, PACE program or utility billing options for customers.

GEO supports land use policies that:

- Recognize the rights of home and business owners to pursue effective partnerships, community aggregation, and agreements with renewable energy technology and related service providers.
- Protection of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems, agricultural lands, and the environment.
- Address community interests through robust public outreach, education, technical assistance, and engagement.

GEO supports job training and workforce development programs at all educational levels and through a wide variety of institutions to provide opportunities AND CAREERS for the next generation of Ohioans as well as for workers displaced by changes in other economic sectors.

GEO supports inclusion and diversity across the clean energy sector. We are committed to training and utilizing a diverse workforce that includes individuals of all races, genders, ages, religions, and identities.

GEO supports local, state, national, and international efforts to address climate change. Any serious attempt to reduce greenhouse gases must acknowledge the contributions of the energy sector and promote the development and installation of clean energy technologies. Climate change and extreme weather events negatively impact Ohio's environment, public health, and economy, including agriculture, water quality, infrastructure, tourism, and quality of life.