

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – March 19, 2013

LWVO Lobbyist Report

Renewable Energy (LWVUS Positions on Natural Resources)

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LWVO activities on renewable energy involve legislative testimony, discussions with individual legislators, and background research.

Last year saw the Legislature add some small non-renewable projects to the list of renewable energy facilities which can contribute to fulfilling Ohio's goals. There was also an attempt to include a planned project at AK Steel, which would harness the gas escaping their blast-furnace chimney as electricity. While the project had technological merit, the League testified against designating this as renewable energy. The legislation passed and AK Steel got a large government grant to aid in construction. It was satisfying to learn that they eventually abandoned the project as not economical.

Also last year a bill was introduced into the Senate seeking to abolish Ohio's renewable energy goals. In December, First Energy flew a trial balloon on freezing Ohio's energy conservation goals at their 2012 levels. Neither effort got very far. We anticipate that one, or both, ideas will be back this year.

Of most concern is a well-financed national effort to eliminate all state renewable-energy requirements. While we expect that a bill to do this will easily pass the Senate, we understand that its prospects are marginal in the House. The main arguments will be excessive costs and large job losses, neither of which claim can stand scrutiny. We have been making a major effort to develop refuting information.

Chances appear slim of seeing the energy-conservation freeze, but we will be prepared if legislation is introduced.

Please feel free to contact me with questions and suggestions at alanpeg@alum.mit.edu