



2021 Year in Review

A LETTER FROM CEO, RACHAEL BELZ

Greetings from the front lines of Ohio's climate movement.

As we all continue to adapt to fallout from the pandemic, **I'm proud to say that Ohio Citizen Action and Ohio Consumers Power Alliance have not just reacted but have proactively forged ahead toward our new normal.**

We made time for internal work this year to analyze every employee's job, identify any gaps or overlaps, and better align people's positions with their talents and organizational needs. We also offered a two-day diversity, equity and inclusion workshop for all staff and board that was tailored to our organization. It may not sound that exciting, but this work prepares us for the growth and greater impact we require to fulfill our mission, even as we break down old systemic barriers to change within our own organization. My new title, CEO, is just one of the changes that grew out of this work. Not only does it more accurately reflect the work I do, it's a title better understood by the public, our members and donors, and funders.

Externally, we also branched out to deploy our campaign resources in a new way by augmenting our existing field canvass with local hires for the Portsmouth Energy Aggregation Ballot initiative last fall. Aggregation, coupled with renewable energy use, arguably presents the best single strategy toward reducing carbon emissions locally, while saving customers money on their energy bills. Look for us to do even more aggregation ballot work in 2022.

I also consider my work with the Ohio Climate Justice Fund (OCJF) to be critical social justice work toward not just a new normal, but a stronger Ohio. For too long, Ohio's climate movement has been too white and too insular, to its own detriment. **As one of the Founding Advisory Board Members of OCJF, I've had the privilege of helping to direct approximately \$500,000 in funding to 18 small, grassroots groups led and/or governed by Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC).** This funding helps grassroots leaders to engage with their communities to find the intersection of racial justice and climate action. Their wisdom and expertise only makes us stronger.



Finally, I hope that last year heralded a pivot toward reinvigorated government and corporate accountability as part of our new normal. Some of the architects of corrupt House Bill 6 were fired or fined in 2021, and there are more revelations to come. Customers saw some of their money refunded. **We're not finished cleaning up the mess, and we certainly haven't seen the end of court battles, be they criminal, civil or the court of public opinion.** I'm sure you agree it's not too much to expect government officials to reject bribes and put consumers' interests above their own or those of their campaign donors.

I really appreciate your support last year and look forward to working with you toward a new normal that values and serves us all -- in 2022 and beyond.

www.ohiocitizen.org

1511 Brookpark Rd, Cleveland, Ohio 44109 • 216-861-5200 • sgabor@ohiocitizen.org
2300 Montana Ave Suite 518, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211 • 513-888-9980 • menglish@ohiocitizen.org



OhioCitizenAction



OhioCitizenAct



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OUR IMPACT

What makes Ohio Citizen Action and Ohio Consumers Power Alliance unique among groups working to transition Ohio toward an affordable, safe, clean energy future is our ability to reach out to Ohioans for one-on-one conversations. Door-to-door, digitally and on the phone we inform and engage people to work together in the public interest. In 2021, we worked on: Repealing all of House Bill 6– specifically the OVEC coal bailouts; Power a Clean Future Ohio, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio accountability; energy aggregation and protecting our First Amendment rights. Here's how we did by the numbers:

FIELD CANVASS*

field canvass operating *APRIL 30 to OCTOBER 11, 2021

27,704
DOORS
KNOCKED

11,359
CONTACTS

967
MEMBERS
SIGNED UP

2,808
SIGNATURES
OF SUPPORT FOR
OUR CLEAN ENERGY GOALS



PHONE CANVASS

9,295
CONTACTS

2,968
CONTRIBUTIONS

2,872
PATCH-THROUGH CALLS TO
DECISION MAKERS

3,314
FOLLOW UP
EMAILS



DIGITAL ORGANIZING

8,045
TEXT MESSAGES
SENT

3,009
DIRECT DIGITAL MESSAGES
TO DECISION MAKERS

24,434
FOLLOWERS

2,739
RETWEETS

599,000
IMPRESSIONS



**FULL REPEAL
HB6
NOW. NO EXCUSES.**

REPEAL HOUSE BILL 6/OVEC

772

**DIGITAL LETTERS TO
LAWMAKERS**

2,127

**PATCH-THROUGH
CALLS TO
DECISION MAKERS**

50

**RALLIED IN PERSON
IN COLUMBUS**



**Power A Clean
Future Ohio**
LOCAL COMMUNITIES LEADING THE WAY

POWER A CLEAN FUTURE OHIO

1,245

**HANDWRITTEN LETTERS
TO MAYORS**



PUCO ACCOUNTABILITY

442

**DIGITAL LETTERS TO
GOVERNOR DEWINE**

521

**PATCH-THROUGH CALLS
TO THE GOVERNOR**

**NO SB
52**

The bill subjects ONLY wind & solar projects to a new layer of government regulation in addition to the state process
This bill will act as a MORATORIUM for renewable energy projects in Ohio
A Clean Energy Investment & Jobs Killer

SENATE BILL 52

224

**CALLS TO
LAWMAKERS**

**YES FOR Clean Energy
CHOICE**

PORTSMOUTH AGGREGATION

1,097

FIELD CONTACTS

55%

SUPPORT RATE

THE FIGHT TO REPEAL HB 6

OCA and our allies have been fighting against House Bill 6 since 2019 and specifically calling for its repeal since news of the \$61 million bribery scheme broke in July 2020. Dubbed “the worst energy bill of the 21st century,” HB 6 bailed out Ohio’s two nuclear plants, two coal plants and gutted the state’s renewable energy standards and energy efficiency programs. **As a result of our accountability work and pressure, the Ohio legislature finally repealed parts**

of HB 6 in April 2021, most notably the \$1 billion nuclear bailout. We also saw progress in 2021 toward accountability for the people and institutions which abused the public trust and improperly appropriated consumer money to enrich themselves.

CONSEQUENCES OF HB6 SCANDAL

 FIRED FirstEnergy Corp. president and CEO Chuck Jones	 RESIGNED Former Chairman of the PUCO Sam Randazzo	 EXPELLED Former Speaker of the House Larry Householder
 GUILTY Lobbyist Juan Cespedes	 GUILTY Political Strategist Jeff Longstreth	 GUILTY Generation Now 501(c)4 group controlled by FirstEnergy
 REPEALED Nuclear subsidies in House Bill 6	 \$27.5 MILLION REFUND “Decoupling” language in HB6 that guaranteed revenue for FirstEnergy	

LET'S GET TO WORK!

We have more work to do to
repeal ALL of HB6.

RESTORE Ohio's Energy Efficiency Standards	
RESTORE Ohio's Renewable Energy Standards	
REPEAL the OVEC coal plant bailout	



However, one provision of HB6 still directs our tax dollars to subsidize two dirty Cold War-era coal plants. **Since April 2021, \$107 million in subsidies have gone to the coal plants and \$287,000 more rolls in everyday -- paid for by consumers.** In June, OCA ramped up our call to repeal the OVEC bailout. And while Ohio legislators introduced two full OVEC bailout repeal bills - House Bill 351 (Lanese and Stoltzfus), and Senate Bill 117 (Romanchuk and Craig)- **both bills languish in committee, despite bipartisan support.** In December, we had a bit of fun calling out lawmakers’ inaction by holding a Statehouse rally where we delivered stockings of coal to “naughty” lawmakers. We will continue prioritizing this issue in 2022.

OPPOSING UNFAIR REGULATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Early in the year we opposed **Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118** as they added another layer of regulation on renewable energy projects that applied to no other type of energy. **We and thousands of other Ohioans deemed the bills anti-economic development, anti-consumer, and anti-business.** Unfortunately, lawmakers didn’t see it that way and the governor signed it into law on July 12, creating one more unnecessary obstacle to developing in-state renewable energy generation.

WATCHINGPUCO.COM

After disgraced Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Chair Sam Randazzo resigned in late 2020, we converted the website we'd devoted to his ouster to focus on his replacement. Now dubbed WatchingPUCO.com, **we urged Governor DeWine to appoint someone with no ties to the utility industry.** In March 2021, the governor decided upon former Franklin County judge Jenifer French. French has a big job to restore public trust in PUCO, especially as new evidence came to light in October about the agency giving FirstEnergy a pass on creating a subsidiary that may not have complied with corporate separation and other rules.



Ohio Consumers Power Alliance statement:

“Jenifer French’s first order of business as PUCO Chair should be to remove the final vestige of the Householder and Randazzo era at the agency. We call on her to replace Scott Elisar as legislative and policy director and begin to restore confidence in the state’s regulatory process.”

- Rachael Belz, Ohio Consumers Power Alliance

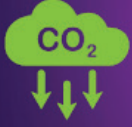



ENERGY JOBS & JUSTICE ACT

Looking to the future, OCA proudly supports the **Energy Jobs & Justice Act (EJJA)**. On September 21st, State Representatives Casey Weinstein and Stephanie Howse joined youth, public health, and community leaders as they introduced a bold, comprehensive energy policy for all Ohioans. News of the HB 6 scandal revealed deep corruption in the Ohio state government, and serious structural flaws in the utility regulatory system which must be addressed by new reforms. The Energy Jobs & Justice Act does this and more by:

THE ENERGY JOBS & JUSTICE ACT
is a bold, comprehensive energy policy for all Ohioans.

**EQUITY**
Reduces institutional barriers and invests in workforce development while ensuring all electricity sold to Ohio utility customers and all electricity generated in Ohio is 100% carbon-free by 2050

**CARBON EMISSIONS REDUCTION**
Encourages renewable energy and waste reduction development while ensuring all electricity sold to Ohio utility customers and all electricity generated in Ohio is 100% carbon-free by 2050

**TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY**
Creates the Governor’s Office of Energy Justice to ensure PUCO decisions are guided by the principles of energy justice and removes undue utility influence over the PUCO

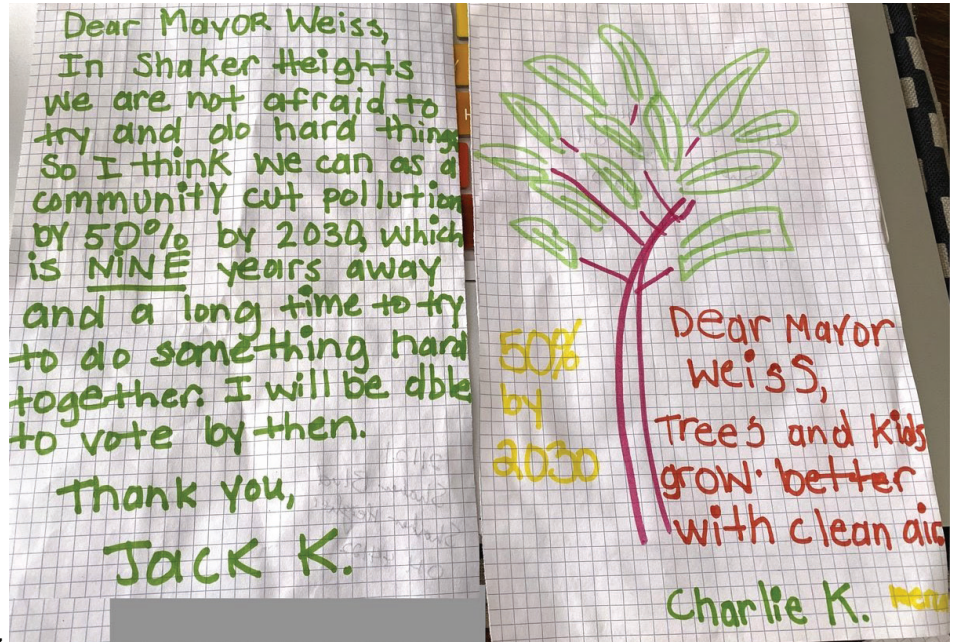
- **Moving Ohio towards a more equitable clean energy future by encouraging clean energy growth, energy waste reduction, and curbing utility influence over policymaking and regulatory actions.**
- **Launching the state’s largest economic development initiative in recent history, prioritizing clean energy jobs and environmental justice programs.**
- **Centering equitable policy designed to ensure clean energy benefits go to those most historically and disproportionately harmed by Ohio’s regressive energy policies.**

In the aftermath of HB 6, EJJA proposes Ohio move toward comprehensive clean energy policy rooted in equity, economic development, and accountability. Supporting such a strong and necessary energy policy proposal, we are excited to help propel Ohio into the future with solutions that work for all of us.

POWER A CLEAN FUTURE OHIO

Ohio Citizen Action is proud to be the grassroots engine of Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO), the nonpartisan organization that works with local elected leaders and community members to develop and implement proven climate solutions. While the state legislature resists positive change around energy policy, cities and towns across Ohio lead the way by passing clean energy resolutions to dramatically reduce their carbon emissions by 2030. In 2021, the OCA field team talked with Ohioans about PCFO in 21 cities, five of which joined the movement. Congratulations and welcome to Lakewood, Shaker Heights, Solon, Cleveland, and Canton. Currently, 27

communities of all political stripes across the state have signed up to access the resources and training needed to create community plans to meet their climate goals. We look forward to welcoming many more in 2022.



YES FOR CLEAN ENERGY CHOICE AND SAY NO TO NOPEC



In addition to our ongoing work, we engaged in two new campaigns in 2021. This fall we supported local leaders in Portsmouth who asked voters to consider aggregating residents into an electricity buying group, then contracting with suppliers for 100% renewable energy. **OCA staff joined local canvassers to educate the public and vote Yes for Clean Energy Choice.** While the initiative failed to pass, the 23-vote margin proves that **aggregation is a viable option, even in coal country**, and a good use of our resources to move the needle on climate change.

We also started a campaign to urge the 240 communities who contract for electricity through the Northern Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) to **hold out for a better deal than the "Green Community Choice" program they were offered this past summer.** Our analysis indicated the offer was too vague, hinted at greater cost rather than savings, and came with an unnecessarily short deadline that precluded real debate. For those reasons, we urged communities to Say NO to NOPEC. This campaign is ongoing, but **we're confident that NOPEC can and will do better by its 940,000 customers.**

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

The big news on our internal development is the creation of a Human Resources Department and development of a new vision statement: **To build power in order to meet challenges, hold decision makers accountable and achieve a just and equitable future.** Both these steps prepare us for the strategic planning needed to both improve internal operations and increase external impact.

Sadly, we said goodbye to a couple of people as well. Tobili left in the fall for her dream job in alumni development at alma mater Case Western Reserve University, and Phone Canvass Director **Brad Holmes** went on to work as Ohio Program Manager at Action for the Climate Emergency. We wish them both the very best.

In December we welcomed our final founding member of the Metzenbaum Society Giving Circle. **We're so grateful to the first 100 people to inaugurate this major donor society by investing \$1,000 or more into our common-sense consumer and environmental mission** and look forward to welcoming more Metzenbaum Society members in 2022.

We also hired and promoted several staff in 2021. This spring we brought on **Mike Todd** to direct the Cleveland field canvass, which operated from May to November, when we transferred field staff to the phone canvass for winter. **Tobili Hatcher** was hired as Digital Communications Assistant. **Kyle Marcum** was also hired in spring as Senior Utilities Organizer, but later was promoted to the newly created role of Political Director. **Tatiana Rodzos** was promoted in May to the Campaigns Organizer role and Jessica Smith-Szabo was promoted to Human Resources Officer.



(Brad Holmes, Tatiana Rodzos and Mike Todd at a 2021 James Taylor/Jackson Browne show)



We were also very pleased to welcome Cincinnati's **Carolyn Gilbert** to the Ohio Citizen Action board this year. Carolyn's two businesses, G&B Strategic Political Consulting and NuVoodoo Media Services channel her research, social media, marketing and public relations expertise to a variety of businesses and non-profit clients. Her volunteer work includes strategic planning and fundraising efforts for Congregation Beth Adam, and she serves on the Executive Committee of the Cincinnati chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

Throughout the year, we held or participated in several virtual events, including two more **"Conversations with Rachael Belz"** webinars in January with SeMia Bray of Black Environmental Leaders and in June with Neil Waggoner of the Sierra Club. **The "conversations" series combines deeper dives into our campaigns with Q&A from participants to provide context and behind-the-scenes perspective.** Rachael also served on a panel in August at the City Club of Cleveland discussing the work of the Ohio Climate Justice Fund.

IN MEMORIAM



We lost two powerful friends and allies this year. Longtime Akron OCA organizer **Rich Swirsky** passed away in May after a battle with Leukemia. Among many other contributions, Rich will be remembered for his work to **enact one of the nation's first local chemical right-to-know laws, which later influenced the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act.**

We also said goodbye to **Chuck Nelson**, with whom we worked in the late 2000s on the issue of mountaintop

removal coal mining. As a retired UMWA Coal Miner of 29 years, **he knew first-hand the toll coal mining took on the land and on people's health.** Among his vast volunteer work, he helped scientists study the public health impacts of mining. This work alone led to 30 peer-reviewed studies revealing the links between mining and health outcomes for coalfield residents. He inspired tens of thousands of people to rethink our nation's dependence on coal.



2021 Board and Staff



(OCA staff May 2021)

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