

The Honorable Gene Yaw, Chairman
Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
362 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Caryolyn Committa, Minority Chair
Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
457 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Chris Dush, Chairman
Senate Local Government Committee
16 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Tim Kearney, Minority Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
463 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

May 11, 2021

Chairman Yaw, Chairman Dush, Minority Chair Committa and Minority Chair Kearney and the members of the Senate committees on Environmental Resources and Local Government, thank you for allowing Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA) the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 275. My name is Mike Butler, and I am the Executive Director of Consumer Energy Alliance-MidAtlantic based out of Pittsburgh.

On behalf of CEA and our more than 30,000 individual members in Pennsylvania, I am sharing our strong support of Senate Bill 275 that has been introduced by Senator Yaw. We believe this legislation will offer important consumer protections for all Pennsylvanians, especially those economically struggling to get by and seniors living on fixed-incomes.

Founded in 2006, CEA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing virtually every sector of the U.S. economy – from the iron and steel industry to truckers, airlines, agriculture, labor unions, restaurants, chemical manufacturers, small businesses, and families. Our members support a rational, all-of-the-above energy policy that utilizes all of our domestic natural resources – both traditional and renewable – while ensuring continued progress in protecting our shared environment.

Quite simply, SB 275 is commonsense legislation that ensures consumers can continue to choose to have access to affordable, reliable energy in their homes and businesses.

Across the country, we have witnessed an increase in irresponsible policies put forth by local governments that would have the unintended consequences of increasing prices while failing to achieve environmental goals.

To be clear, CEA supports actions that thoughtfully advance our nation towards a cleaner, more environmentally responsible energy future. We believe that responsible policies always consider the needs of consumers while leveraging and supporting the development of state-of-the-art technologies to improve our environmental stewardship, aiding in the continued reductions of all emissions.

However, misguided attempts to ban natural gas by forcing mandates onto consumers will lead to astronomical cost increases and jeopardize energy resources that are helping our nation reduce harmful emissions.

In Pennsylvania, natural gas provides heat to half of our households according to the United States Energy Information Administration, more than any other fuel source. Depending on the model selected, electrification mandates requiring the replacement of major appliances like hot water heaters, furnaces, gas stoves, gas dryers, installing a heat pump and other wiring and labor costs could top out at more than \$20,000 for each and every homeowner that is dependent on gas service.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a January 2020 survey by CNBC found only 41% of Americans had enough savings to cover a \$1,000 emergency. For a Pennsylvania homeowner or family that relies on natural gas for heating, cooking and their daily energy needs, a service moratorium or an electrification mandate could be potentially ruinous.

Fortunately, reliable and affordable natural gas has helped minimize the financial burdens many of our neighbors and small businesses are facing across the state. In fact, according to a recent study from CEA, Pennsylvania's energy consumers saved more than \$32 billion between 2008 and 2018 as a result of expanded and modernized natural gas infrastructure.

These are real, life-changing savings for families and businesses: Savings families have relied on during this pandemic to make ends meet; savings businesses have relied on to make payroll and invest in their employees.

We can and must have energy that is affordable, reliable and meets our shared environmental goals. In fact, another CEA study showed that while energy production in Pennsylvania has soared by nearly 3000% our emissions have dropped by 92%. While much environmental advocacy may be rooted in good intentions, the fact remains that utilizing all of our resources like natural gas, coupled with more efficient wind and solar power generation, is leading us to a cleaner energy future with lower emissions.

The irony is that the groups supporting these harmful mandates ignore the tremendous air quality improvements and carbon reduction benefits that natural gas has provided our country and Pennsylvania. The simple fact is we are moving toward a cleaner energy future. And, moving forward doesn't require creating an unworkable patchwork of local prohibitions which increases the cost and complexity of delivering the essential energy Pennsylvanians deserve.

This is why SB 275 is critically important for consumers and why we urge the committee to pass this legislation.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 275. We encourage you to move swiftly and adopt this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Butler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Butler

Executive Director, CEA Mid-Atlantic