

Preserve Energy Alternatives' Momentum

On May Day the governor of Ohio signed into law renewable energy legislation, making the Buckeye State the 26th in the nation prepared to compete for related jobs and new business; reduced residential, commercial and industrial energy costs; and capture of an estimated \$1.3 billion to \$1.5 billion in new renewable energy investments.

More than half of all states now have approved such legislation to move rapidly into the future of alternative resources. In Michigan, where Great Lakes wind power is estimated to be second only to some Plains States, no such leadership can be found.

Michigan House Democrats tie-barred Michigan's promising legislative package to a bill gutting the state's utility deregulation. Grand Rapids Business Journal in March criticized the allegiance to both DTE Energy

Co. and Consumers Energy, recalling the crybaby tactics used when deregulation was artfully moved through the legislature by then Gov. John Engler, despite the utility companies whining about "stranded costs."

The Business Journal reiterates the comment of March 24: The business community (and consumer groups) has been solidly opposed to changes in deregulation — because it's working. Eliminating the customer choice plan would further abuse the businesses upon which the state must rely to pull up from the kamikaze dive created by a legislature so inept that its leaders believe bully politics are the mission. Businesses can ill afford another cost hike stamped with legislative approval.

The fact that alternative energy sources are already being identified and deployed is obvious by the number of stories reported

this week in the Business Journal. The fact that Wright or Sparta townships will have ordinances providing for installation of electricity producing wind energy conservation systems (along with their fellows in larger municipalities throughout Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon counties) shows local leadership even before it can be evidenced at the state level.

The grass-root constituencies are ahead of the legislature and will hopefully shove it through to state representation. Even while alternative energy companies are investing, it is unlikely that industry growth could be sustained under the proposed state legislation. Instead it is impeded by such "policy" of politics.

The Business Journal agrees with the American Wind Energy Association, which unabashedly demanded that Gov. Jennifer Granholm veto the legislation if the state Senate fails to kill it. The association, which includes a world-wide developer of commercial wind farms now leasing rights in Kent and Ottawa counties, told senators the legislation "will jeopardize at least \$2 billion of new investment in wind energy projects now under development in the state." Further, the national group noted "toothless enforcement provisions, as well as other provisions that potentially undermine cost-effective procurement. The House legislation purports to create a renewable (energy) market but actually does not do so.

"The House legislation, as a package, cannot accurately be described as a renewable energy standard, and the public should not expect economic benefits to result from the package."

The Business Journal again reiterates that the Senate and the governor must act in concert with the leadership displayed by constituents.

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