



June 9, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bipartisan Forecast Integrity Bill Introduced as Coalition Grows Against Unverified Utility Projections

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio customers should not be forced to pay higher electric bills based on utility projections no one has independently tested, a growing coalition of lawmakers, small businesses, manufacturers and customer advocates said today.

State senators Mark Romanchuk, R-Mansfield, and Paula Hicks-Hudson, D-Toledo, introduced the Electricity Forecast Integrity Act ([Senate Bill 457](#)), legislation designed to stop speculative utility forecasts from becoming customer costs without proof.

“Right now, the system gives utilities every incentive to overstate the future and very little obligation to prove it,” said Lindsey Short, managing director of energy and advocacy services for the Ohio Manufacturers’ Association (OMA). “That is backwards. If a forecast is going to be used to justify costs paid by Ohio customers, the utility should have to show its work first.”

The bill comes as Ohio customers face rising electric costs and growing concern that speculative demand forecasts are being treated as financial commitments before they have been independently tested.

At a Statehouse press conference, speakers from the OMA, the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel, The Buckeye Institute and the Northwest Ohio Aggregation Coalition backed the bipartisan legislation, underscoring the expanding concern over projected demand that may never materialize.

This is a rare energy issue where very different voices are landing in the same place. Manufacturers, small businesses, consumer advocates, fiscal watchdogs and local government aggregation leaders are all warning against allowing monopoly utilities to turn untested projections into real costs.

The coalition’s support extends beyond the groups represented at the Statehouse, with the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA) also backing stronger oversight and transparency in utility forecasting.

“Energy costs are a top issue for Ohio’s small business owners, and that cost pressure will continue to worsen with high speculative utility forecasts,” said Jared Weiser, NFIB Ohio state director. “Small businesses depend on fair and reasonable standards. These projections should be independently tested to ensure a safeguard for small businesses and every customer paying an electric bill. We support this legislation for creating more transparency and oversight in the forecasting process and thank state senators Mark Romanchuk and Paula Hicks-Hudson for

introducing this pro-small business bill.”

“Community action agencies across Ohio see firsthand how rising utility costs force families to make impossible choices between keeping the lights on, paying rent or purchasing groceries and medication,” said Jason C. Smith, executive director of the OACAA. “OACAA supports efforts to strengthen oversight and transparency in utility forecasting to help protect Ohio consumers from unnecessary cost increases.”

The Electricity Forecast Integrity Act would require more transparency, verification and oversight before utility demand forecasts can be used to support costs that flow through to customers. Supporters said Ohio needs a stronger standard before utilities and regional grid planners use projected electric demand to justify new infrastructure, market costs or rate structures paid for by families, small businesses and manufacturers.

“Planning for reliability does not mean accepting every utility forecast at face value,” Short said. “Ohio can prepare for future demand without letting speculation become a business model.”

The OMA [previously released analysis](#) warning that unverified large-load forecasts can distort regional power markets and shift enormous costs onto customers. The legislation builds on those concerns by creating a clearer standard for how forecasts are reviewed before they are used to justify customer-paid costs.

###

The Ohio Manufacturers' Association is Ohio's largest statewide business association composed solely of manufacturers. Established in 1910, the OMA's mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. It represents manufacturers of all sizes in every subsector of the industry. Manufacturing is Ohio's largest economic sector, employing approximately 690,000 Ohioans and contributing more than \$138 billion annually to the economy. Visit ohiomfg.com, or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Dave O'Neil
Director, Communications and Marketing
(614) 302-7990
doneil@ohiomfg.com

33 N. High St., 6th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3005

Phone: 614-224-5111 • Toll free: 800-662-4463
Fax: 614-224-1012

oma@ohiomfg.com
WWW.OHIOMFG.COM