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## **OMA's Answer to Bad Energy Policy Is DENIED**



***Balderson, Latta and SB Energy close Ohio Manufacturers' Energy Conference  
with focus on tougher scrutiny, regulatory accountability and who pays***

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) sent every attendee at today's Ohio Manufacturers' Energy Conference home with a red DENIED stamp.

It was a joke with a point.

The conference examined some of the biggest questions facing Ohio's energy future, including whether forecasts are being scrutinized closely enough, whether policy is keeping pace with a rapidly changing energy landscape and who should bear the costs of major new infrastructure.

Manufacturers are not bystanders in Ohio's energy debate. Industrial customers account for roughly one-third of all electricity sold in the state, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"That gives us a hell of a lot at stake in whether these decisions are made right," said Ryan Augsburger, OMA president. "We need regulators to stop treating forecasts like facts. We need them to test the assumptions before customers are handed the bill. What we do not need is another decade of bad decisions followed by somebody telling existing customers to pick up the tab."

Those questions carried into the afternoon, where federal policy met the realities of building and investing.

U.S. Reps. Troy Balderson and Bob Latta addressed attendees on the policies shaping America's energy future, including the need for more generation, faster permitting, greater reliability and stronger protections for customers as electricity demand grows.

"What you can do for all of us is communicate with us," Balderson told the manufacturing audience. "We need the information that you have. You're there on a daily basis."

Latta then turned to the question of who should pay when massive new loads connect to the grid.

"We want to make sure that the ratepayers aren't paying for a data center that comes into the area," Latta said. "If you've got costs that are being incurred, that data center should be the one doing it, not the customer."

The conference concluded with Abhijeet Sathe, co-CEO of SB Energy, who laid out the scale and vision for the PORTS Technology Campus near Piketon, calling it the world's largest construction project and detailing plans to pair new generation and transmission investment with Ohio's manufacturing strength, skilled workforce and energy leadership. He added that the project's total cost is expected to exceed what it took to build the International Space Station.

Sathe said the project is designed as a multigenerational investment in southern Ohio, bringing new jobs, strengthening the region's industrial base and expanding long-term economic opportunity.

"We're going to generate an electron for an electron, and we'll pay for all the transmission on the project ourselves," Sathe said.

Sathe's plans put a real-world answer behind one of the conference's central questions. If major new loads are coming, what should they be expected to bring with them?

By day's end, the message was clear. Ohio cannot afford energy policy built around wishful

thinking, slow decisions or somebody else's tab. Forecasts need scrutiny. Investment needs certainty. And when new projects impose new costs, accountability has to come with them.

"There were a lot of big ideas discussed today," Augsburger said. "Some deserve a yes. Some deserve a harder look. And some deserve exactly what everyone walked out of here carrying today. DENIED."

The 2026 Ohio Manufacturers' Energy Conference brought together manufacturers, policymakers, energy experts, consumer advocates and companies making major investments in Ohio's energy future.

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*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](http://ohiomfg.com), or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).*

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