



**State Representative
Jack Cera**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 4, 2014

Contact: Pam Wilson, Legislative Aide (614) 466-3735

Rep. Cera Announces Passage of Legislation to Give Ohio More Freedom in Implementing EPA Standards

COLUMBUS—State Representative Jack Cera (D-Bellaire) announced today that House Bill 506, a bipartisan proposal he jointly sponsored, has passed Ohio House of Representatives unanimously with a vote of 95-0.

Rep. Cera is extremely concerned about how the newly-announced United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) proposed rules will impact eastern Ohio's coal industry. A rush to meet the requirements will be detrimental for Ohio's families and a burden to consumers and businesses. Excluding coal from Ohio's energy plan impacts Ohio's energy prices—making them unaffordable. There is also genuine concern for the potential loss of good-paying jobs in the coal industry and other industries. These are major factors that need to be considered when implementing federal regulations. If these requirements are not stopped at the federal level, then Ohio needs to be able to implement them in a way that preserves jobs, protects consumers and provides reliable power.

The US EPA is pushing regulations to reduce carbon emissions from coal-fired and gas-fired power plants by 2016. House Bill 506 will allow the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) to adopt different standards or longer compliance schedules than those allocated in the federal regulations. The proposal calls upon the OEPA adopt rules to help meet impending US EPA regulations on carbon dioxide emissions from existing coal-fired and natural gas-fired power plants in Ohio.

This legislation allows the OEPA to consider important factors such as jobs, consumer electric rates, reliability and the environment when forming a strategy for implementing the standards. Rep. Cera said this flexibility is extremely significant because over 70 percent of Ohio's electricity comes from coal and it is a reliable power source. "It is also imperative that implementation of the rules doesn't burden consumers, families and businesses through the loss of jobs in the coal industry and related industries," stated Rep. Cera.

In addition to consideration of plant design and age, and the economic impacts of closing the unit, Rep. Cera noted that Ohio will have to consider the best plan for providing the least amount of disruption to the state's electrical grid. "January's major cold snap almost caused a major system disruption in the delivery of electricity to homes across Ohio. In fact, the PJM Interconnection was nearly unable to charge the grid, which would have impacted electricity for more that 61 million people across 13 states, including Ohio. Taking coal out of the equation can lead to similar crises and would only serve to complicate such a scenario. It would also hit customers in their wallets, costing them more to heat their homes," said Rep. Cera.

“House Bill 506 will provide Ohio with the flexibility to meet these ill-advised federal mandates in a way that takes into account the need to protect jobs and provide a reliable energy source to families in Ohio. We need to keep coal a part of our energy policy for future generations,” added Rep. Cera.

House Bill 506, a bi-partisan effort, is supported by many business and labor organizations. The bill now goes to the Ohio Senate.