

Ohio senators unanimously pass energy bill to encourage generation and change charges

By Erin Glynn
Columbus Dispatch

Ohio senators unanimously voted to change energy policies in the hopes of encouraging more generation on Wednesday.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Bill Reineke, R-Tiffin, [would eliminate fees](#) for two coal plants, get rid of subsidies for utility-scale solar and change the way utilities charge residents.

"Senate Bill 2 was based on four premises: consumer cost, reliability, reduction of barriers for easier entry into the high market and consideration of the free market. Senate Bill 2 is designed to encourage generation and all of us know that Ohio has exploded with growth, and that growth needs energy," Reineke said on the Senate floor.

Sen. Shane Wilkin, R-Hillsboro, introduced an amendment to allow consumers to receive a \$40 annual credit from their utility if they give the utility access to their smart thermostat so it can be adjusted from one to three degrees during peak energy hours and do not override it more than 50% of the time.

The bill now heads to the Ohio House, where lawmakers have their own similar energy bill, [House Bill 15](#).

Sen. Kent Smith, D-Euclid, said he's nervous about the House bill which he said may have other provisions that won't be palatable to the majority.

"This is a great step, but this is the first step, which is to say, if Senate Bill 2 gets adopted by the house, signed by the governor, you know, great. That is a great day. And until that happens, we haven't fixed anything yet," he said.