



Dear Friend,

Here in Central Ohio, utility bills are stretching household budgets thinner than ever, but real progress is happening at City Hall, and the OEC is proud to be part of it. Over the past few months, we've worked alongside community partners and Columbus City Council to push for practical protections that put residents first and start to rein in rising costs.

In December, the OEC supported a landmark ordinance that, for the first time, put guardrails and consumer protections in place for Columbus residents who receive their utilities through third-party resellers. Then, in January, the City Council passed a resolution urging the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to reject AEP Ohio's proposed rate increase. These wins matter, and they show that when we organize and speak up, we can make utilities more affordable and our systems more accountable for the people who rely on them every day. Read on for more information and ways to stay involved locally.

Yours in the fight,

Annalisa Rocca

*Central Ohio Regional Director*

## Regional Events

**February 24, 2026:** [Columbus Youth Climate Action Fund](#) | 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM | Wells Barn at Franklin Park Conservatory. (1851 E Broad St, Columbus, OH 43205)

**March 3, 2026:** [Building Performance Standard Public Meeting](#) | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM | Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) (111 Liberty St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215)

**March 20, 2026:** [MORPC State of the Region](#) | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | Hilton Columbus Downtown (402 North High St, Columbus, OH 43215)

**March 28, 2026:** [Green Columbus Tree Nursery Work Day](#) | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM | South Linden Tree Nursery (1142 East 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH, 43211)

**March 31, 2026:** [Water Quality Workshop](#) | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) (111 Liberty St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43215)

## Regional & Partner Updates

### City of Columbus Passes Utility Reselling Ordinance

In December, the City of Columbus passed a utility reselling ordinance that strengthens protections for renters and residents by capping administrative fees, preventing charges above regulated utility rates, requiring clear monthly bills, and ensuring access to payment plans and timely refunds. The ordinance also preserves flexibility for property owners, including ratio billing for common areas and submetering that can support renewable energy solutions. As utility costs continue to rise, these safeguards help ensure residents pay only what they should for essential services, and the OEC Action Fund testified in support of the legislation.



### Columbus City Council Passes Resolution Urging PUCO to Reject AEP Rate Hike

On January 26th, Columbus City Council voted to urge PUCO to block AEP Ohio's proposed rate hike, siding with residents facing an energy affordability crisis. The OEC Action Fund testified in support of the resolution, underscoring the urgent need to protect households already struggling with rising utility costs. We're proud to stand with community partners pushing back—and huge shout-out to Columbus Stand Up, whose petition has gathered 2,500+ signatures against the increase. [You can sign the petition here!](#) Ohioans deserve fair, affordable energy—not higher bills. Thank you, Councilmember Wyche and Council President Hardin, for your leadership.

### Safe Green Schools Update

Thanks to sustained community action, last week the Columbus City School Board approved the district's very first solar project! This is a big win for our community. The project includes a new solar carport with EV charging stations, helping CCS cut energy costs while investing in a healthier, more sustainable future.

[Click here](#) to send the school board a big thank you and encourage them to pursue more

green energy projects. Taking a moment to express appreciation reinforces good decisions and helps open the door to more progress.

## The Central Ohio Sierra Club is Seeking Volunteers to Support Outings and Environmental Activism Network.



# SIERRA CLUB

## OHIO

The Central Ohio Network will push back against anti-democratic and environmental actions in our region, state, and country while offering outings for participants to enjoy nature during this tumultuous time. They are building a new network of leaders and supporters in an area of the state critical to governmental decision-making and building partnerships to enhance our collective power going forward. If you are interested in helping to get people outdoors to hike, bike, or support service outings, become an Outings Leader. If you are interested in Environmental Activism, join the Sierra Club in volunteering with their Get Out to Vote Campaign, the Great Ohio Climate March, Protect the Darby, and other events. To learn more about these opportunities, contact Lisa Rooney, [lrooneyhome@gmail.com](mailto:lrooneyhome@gmail.com).

## Ohio Environmental Council Updates

### 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding Repealed

The Trump Administration repealed the [2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding](#). This critical finding affirmed that carbon dioxide and other air pollutants endanger public health, and was a strong scientific basis for legal action. This repeal abandons science in favor of polluters, and its consequences will be felt in Ohio, across the nation, and globally. It will worsen the climate impacts Ohioans are already experiencing. We know the truth, we know our task, and we are on your side committed to fight for our shared values. Our work at the state level is critical to make real change in this moment. **Can you support our efforts with a special gift today?**

[Donate](#)

### Law Center Analysis: Carbon Capture & Storage in HB 170

In March 2025, two Ohio representatives introduced House Bill 170 ([HB 170](#)), legislation designed to regulate carbon storage activities as a “matter of general statewide interest that requires uniform statewide regulation.” A laudable mission statement. But would the program, as currently designed, be protective of human health and the environment? The

OEC Law Center Analysis provides our thoughts on HB 170, especially the policies in the bill we view may miss the mark for protecting the health and environment of Ohioans. Before lawmakers pass any legislation regulating carbon storage, these issues must, at minimum, be addressed. [Read the analysis.](#)

## Upcoming OEC Events

We have a variety of exciting events happening all the time, so we encourage you to keep up to date with our [events page](#).

**March 18** | [Action Briefings](#) | 12 PM-1 PM | Virtual

**May 9** | [2026 Green Gala](#) | Columbus Zoo Africa Events Center | Tickets Coming Soon!



{{Disclaimer}}

Ohio Environmental Council  
556 E Town St, Columbus, OH 43215

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