

2026

UTILITY ADVOCATE CONVENING



The Ohio State University - September 24 - 8:30 AM - 5 PM



Welcome!

Hosted by:

Ohio Environmental Council
at WOSU Community Studio

*Agenda may change slightly as we get closer to
September 24*

Your Utility Advocate Convening Ticket
gets you free access to the 2026 Ohio
Public Interest Environmental Law
Conference. We hope you'll join us!

**2026 Ohio Public Interest Environmental
Law Conference**

September 25, 2026

The Ohio State University Moritz College of
Law, 55 W. 12th Ave., Columbus, OH 43210

[Learn more!](#)



Ohio Environmental Council



AGENDA



THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

8:30 - 9:00 AM

**REGISTRATION
AND COFFEE**

9:00 - 9:15 AM

**WELCOME FROM OEC GENERAL COUNSEL CHRIS
TAVENOR**

9:15 - 10:15 AM

UTILITY REGULATION 101

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

This session is designed to set the stage for topics covered throughout the day. It will provide a brief overview of the general components of energy and utility ratemaking including capital versus operational and maintenance expenses, how a utility receives a return, cost allocation, and forms of accelerated recovery. Attendees will also benefit from Marissa's practical experience as the Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Chairperson.

Speakers:

- **Marissa Paslick Gillett**, *American Economic Liberties Project*

15 MINS.

BREAK

AGENDA

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

10:30 - 11:30 AM

RETURN ON EQUITY AND UTILITY INCENTIVES

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

What impact does a utility's return on equity (ROE) have on accelerating an affordable clean energy future? This session will address the basics of ROE and how it can affect utility behavior. This discussion will engage in how updating the ROE formula could incentivize grid investments that are more affordable, improve grid resilience, and maintain reliability.

Optional Reading: Joe Daniel et al., *Rebalancing "Return on Equity" to Accelerate an Affordable Clean Energy Future*, (Feb. 1, 2025). (available at: <https://rmi.org/resources/rebalancing-return-on-equity-to-accelerate-an-affordable-clean-energy-future/>);

Joe Daniel and Ryan Foelske, *3 Reasons Why Climate Players Should Care About Utility Rate of Return* (April 22, 2024) (available at: <https://rmi.org/resources/3-reasons-why-climate-players-should-care-about-utility-rate-of-return/>).

Speakers:

- Joe Daniel, RMI

15 MINS.

BREAK

AGENDA

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

11:30 - 1:00 PM

LUNCH AND PLENARY PANEL: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVOCATES IN PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSIONS

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

During our lunch plenary session, attendees will hear from practitioners and advocates who engage with the public utilities commission process from different angles, both inside the hearing room and “outside” it through public advocacy. Public utilities commission processes include both formal intervention and settlement strategies, but public input at public hearings also forms the basis for part of the evidentiary record. Each speaker will provide their insights on how different parts of the public utilities process can be approached through multiple strategic lenses.

Speakers:

- **Lashelle Johnson**, *League of Conservation Voters* (facilitator)
- **Trent Dougherty**, *Hubay Dougherty*
- **Robert Dove**, *Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter*
- **Morgan Harper**, *Columbus Stand Up! and American Economic Liberties Project*

15 MINS.

BREAK

AGENDA

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

1:15 - 2:30 PM

ENERGY DATA JUSTICE AND WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE A JUST TRANSITION

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Public utilities, especially electric distribution utilities, provide services to millions of customers every day, using and creating immense amounts of data. This data can significantly impact public utility policy—and the very ability of advocates to understand what changes must be made to transform public utilities in a just manner. However, utilities are often successful at redacting or withholding this data from public view and from advocates. Heather Payne will discuss the concept of “data justice,” and how data transparency at public utilities commissions can benefit ratepayers, public policy, and the electric grid itself. Shay Banton will provide a practical example of the use of data to reveal unjust utility outcomes.

Optional Reading: Shay Banton, Interstate Renewable Energy Council, Grid Disparity Analyses in FirstEnergy Service Territory (March 2025) (available at: https://theoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Grid-Disparity-Analyses-in-FirstEnergy-Service-Territory_FINAL.pdf).

Speakers:

- Heather Payne, *Ohio State University Moritz College of Law*
- Shay Banton, *Interstate Renewable Energy Council*

15 MINS.

BREAK

AGENDA

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

2:45 - 3:30 PM

COST ALLOCATION DEEP DIVE

(0.75 Hour of CLE Credit)

During an electric utility rate case before a public utilities commission, regulators must make decisions about how different types of utility costs—including the costs of generating and delivering electricity—are allocated among customer classes, such as residential, commercial, and industrial customers. These decisions can have significant implications for customer rates and equity. Becky Li from RMI will explore the factors that shape cost allocation decisions, approaches to evaluating equitable cost allocation across both generation and distribution costs, and how advocates can engage on these issues in future proceedings before public utilities commissions.

Optional Reading: Jacob Becker et al., *How to Leverage Cost Allocation to Enable Rapid, Affordable, and Equitable Electrification* (2025) (available at: <https://rmi.org/resources/how-to-leverage-cost-allocation-to-enable-rapid-affordable-and-equitable-electrification-emerging-case-studies-from-distribution-planning-practices/>)

Speakers:

- Becky Xilu Li, RMI

15 MINS.

BREAK

AGENDA

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

3:45 - 4:45 PM

LOAD GROWTH AND PLANNING

(1 Hour of CLE Credit)

Electric distribution utilities are constantly projecting and planning supply and demand for the electric grid, in conversation with data from regional transmission grids like PJM. Utilities are reaching an inflection point as new data center load has created drastic increases to existing utility forecasts. How this planning occurs, and how electric distribution utilities determine load growth and allocate costs, matters significantly for the bottom line of how much electricity costs for consumers. Ben Inskeep with Citizens Action Coalition will explore this topic and provide advocacy strategies for pushing back against faulty forecasts and preventing cost shifting.

Speaker: Ben Inskeep, Citizens Action Coalition

4:45 - 5:00 PM

CONCLUSION BY OEC'S GENERAL COUNSEL



Thank you for attending the OEC Utility Advocate Convening!

Our membership powers our work at the [Ohio Environmental Council](#). Our voices are stronger because we are backed up by Ohioans who stand with us. If you gained a lot out from this event, we strongly encourage you to join our movement as a member.

Your membership:

- Supports the Law Center in advocating for our environment and holding polluters accountable in court.
- Sends trusted OEC Advocates to the Statehouse and in the courts fighting for our lands, air, water, and public health.
- Provides you with the opportunity to stay informed by our expert staff and take action with our civic engagement resources.

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