

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!](#)



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.

Follow OEC on social media and invite others as well!

- @OhioEnviro on Instagram
- @OhioEnvironmentalCouncil on Facebook
- The Ohio Environmental Council on LinkedIn



Click here to
Learn More



Click here to
Donate

2026

UTILITY ADVOCATE CONVENING SPEAKERS



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

Speakers



Marissa Paslick Gillett, Senior Fellow, American Economic Liberties Project

Marissa is a Senior Fellow at the American Economic Liberties Project. From April 2019 through October 2025, Marissa served as the Chairman of Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). In her capacity as Connecticut's chief energy regulator, she led a team of lawyers, accountants, engineers and other professional staff in transforming the energy regulatory landscape in the state. During her tenure, Marissa launched the Equitable Modern Grid initiative, which led to the formation of several nationally recognized programs such as the Innovative Energy Solutions regulatory sandbox. She is also known for her commitment to enhancing stakeholder engagement, including through the design, passage and launch of Connecticut's first ever stakeholder compensation program intended to facilitate engagement in utility regulatory proceedings by small businesses and low-income residents. Marissa is also recognized for her multi-year efforts to transition the state to performance-based regulation, as well as other regulatory mechanisms designed to enhance utility accountability and transparency.

Prior to her appointment to PURA, Marissa was the Vice President of External Relations for the Energy Storage Association, serving on the association's executive team and contributing to the organization's overall strategic vision and direction.

From 2011 to 2018, Marissa worked at the Maryland Public Service Commission, where she most recently served as the senior advisor to the chairman. Her portfolio included topics such as offshore wind procurement, statewide energy efficiency programs, advanced metering infrastructure, grid reliability issues and electric vehicle charging and rate design initiatives. Gillett received a B.S. in Bioengineering from Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, and a J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law in Baltimore, Maryland.

Speakers



Joe Daniel, Principal, RMI

Joe is a principal in RMI's Carbon Free Electricity team, where he leads the development and deployment of quantitative tools that help accelerate affordable and equitable utility decarbonization pathways. Joe began his career in 2005, modeling energy use and fugitive emissions at a petrochemical facility outside Mobile, Alabama. He went on to work as an engineering consultant at more than 30 oil refineries, natural gas facilities, and power plants. Since 2011, he has focused on the electric utility industry,

where he worked on over 100 utility proceedings across the country and authored expert testimony in response to state, regional, and federal energy policy proposals. Prior to joining RMI, he was the electricity markets manager at the Union of Concerned Scientists, an analyst for the Beyond Coal Campaign at the Sierra Club, and an associate at Synapse Energy Economics. Joe is an active member of the US Association of Energy Economists and served as a technical advisor to the NARUC-NASEO Joint Task Force on Comprehensive Electricity Planning.



Trent Dougherty, Attorney, Hubay Dougherty

Trent brings over 20 years of experience in environmental, energy, and nonprofit law, advocating for a cleaner, greener, and more equitable Ohio. As an attorney at Hubay Dougherty, Trent represents clean energy businesses, residential consumers, and environmental organizations across complex regulatory, legislative, and litigation arenas—including proceedings before PUCO, OPSB, FERC, and state agencies. Trent guides clients through rate cases, renewable energy siting, and policy advocacy to drive

sustainable solutions forward. His unique blend of nonprofit expertise, regulatory experience, and a deep public interest ethic allows him to provide mission-driven organizations with comprehensive legal guidance and representation tailored to their needs. Trent also serves as Executive Director of the Midwest Biodiversity Institute (MBI), a nonprofit research and consulting organization focused on assessing, protecting, and restoring aquatic ecosystems.

Speakers



Robert Dove, *Director + Chair, Gaming + Sports Betting Practice, Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter*

Robert is a key member of the firm's commercial litigation team and maintains a formidable practice focused on representing the interests of his diverse clients across numerous highly regulated industries. He serves as a strategic advisor to businesses navigating the often-complex regulations that require their strict

compliance and leads many of the firm's client engagements in matters involving energy efficiency, public utilities, and data security and privacy. He also serves as chair of the firm's Gaming + Sports Betting practice, working with clients on establishing, expanding, and protecting their operations.



Morgan Harperm, *Co-founder & Executive Director, Columbus Stand Up!*

Morgan is the Co-founder and Executive Director of Columbus Stand Up! Columbus Stand Up! is a grassroots organization seeking to engage working class people of all ages in the electoral process, support the building of stable and healthy communities, and to hold elected officials accountable. In addition to her grassroots advocacy work, Morgan has spent her professional career in consumer advocacy. Morgan currently serves as the Director of Policy and

Advocacy at the American Economic Liberties Project. There, she leads Economic Liberties and Fight Corporate Monopolies' advocacy efforts. Prior to joining AELP, Morgan served as Senior Advisor for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau from 2013 to 2017. Morgan holds a Master's in Public Administration from Princeton University and law degree from Stanford Law School.

Speakers



Heather Payne, *Carter C. Kissell Professor in Law at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law*

Heather Payne is the Carter C. Kissell Professor in Law at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and a leader in the areas of energy law, environmental law, and evolving regulatory policy. A former chemical engineer and corporate executive, she brings a deep understanding of both the technical and economic implications of policies to address new realities in a carbon- and water-constrained world. Professor Payne's scholarship has appeared or will appear in several leading journals, including the UC Irvine, Florida, and UCLA Law Reviews.

Before joining the Moritz faculty, Professor Payne was on the law faculty at Seton Hall University School of Law and Fellow and Assistant Director of the Center for Climate, Energy, Environment and Economics (CE3) at the University of North Carolina School of Law. Prior to entering academia, she clerked for Judge Martha Geer on the North Carolina Court of Appeals and worked with Sears Holdings Corporation and Honeywell International. Professor Payne was a 2024 Distinguished Energy Law Scholar at Vermont Law & Graduate School and currently serves on the AALS Natural Resources & Energy Law Section Executive Committee.



Becky Xilu Li, *Manager, RMI*

Becky is a Manager at RMI (formerly Rocky Mountain Institute), an independent nonprofit working to transform global energy systems through market-driven solutions. At RMI, she works with regulators, utilities, consumer and environmental advocates, and other stakeholders on utility transition planning and regulatory strategy. Her expertise includes utility financial analysis, ratepayer cost modeling, and

ratemaking, with a focus on supporting stakeholders in navigating regulatory proceedings and developing strategies for reliable and affordable energy transitions. Becky holds a Master of Public Policy in energy policy from the University of California, Berkeley, and an undergraduate degree in Economics from Renmin University of China.

Speakers



Shay Banton, *Regulatory Program Engineer and Energy Justice Policy Advocate for the Interstate Renewable Energy Council*

Shay is the Regulatory Program Engineer and Energy Justice Policy Advocate for the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. Shay is an energy systems engineer, grid integration policy expert, and energy justice advocate with eight years of experience spanning utility regulation, clean energy development, and federally funded R&D. Their work bridges engineering and equity to drive just, accountable, and inclusive clean energy policies that center frontline and historically marginalized communities. Shay has shaped foundational interconnection reforms

in multiple states and helped launch the U.S. Department of Energy's national i2X initiative to improve interconnection practices nationwide.

At IREC, Shay leads the Energy Justice Regulatory sub-program, producing equity-centered analyses and policy development for interconnection, distribution planning, grid transparency, and cost allocation. Shay has also contributed national thought leadership on energy justice and grid equity through their work with Just Solutions, the Ohio Environmental Council, and the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

Speakers



Ben Inskeep, *Program Director, Citizens Action Coalition*

Ben is a Program Director at Citizens Action Coalition. Ben has more than a decade of experience working on energy and utility issues. His prior employment includes working as a policy analyst at the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center at North Carolina State University (2014-2016). He also worked for EQ Research LLC, a clean energy policy consulting firm, from 2016-2022, during which time he managed EQ Research's general rate case subscription service, contributed as a

researcher and analyst to other policy service offerings, and performed customized research and analysis for clients. Ben earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with Highest Distinction from Indiana University in 2009 and both a Master of Science in Environmental Science and a Master of Public Affairs from the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University in 2012. Ben completed the EUCL's Utility Accounting 101 course in April 2023.



Thank you for attending the 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.

Follow OEC on social media and invite others as well!

- @OhioEnviro on Instagram
- @OhioEnvironmentalCouncil on Facebook
- The Ohio Environmental Council on LinkedIn



Learn More



Donate