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Kasich outlines Ohio energy goals

Gov. John Kasich outlined the pillars of his broad energy policy for a handful of Cincinnati business leaders Thursday: Develop the state's shale oil resources, look at new opportunities for coal, expand the use of alternative fuels.

"Energy is critical," he told a small gathering at the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. "If America isn't going to have an energy policy, we ought to have one."

The plan, which grew out of a two-day energy summit last fall in Columbus, includes legislative proposals, regulatory changes and policy initiatives. The legislative proposals will be included in a wide-ranging "budget review" to be introduced around March 12 in the General Assembly.

"Some call us the Saudi Arabia of coal," Kasich said, but added that Ohio should have a diversified energy policy that doesn't rely on any one fuel. Over-reliance on alternatives won't work, either, he said.

"Renewables are important, but don't kid anybody. They aren't reliable and not cost effective."

Kasich said he's pleased with progress on writing rules for developing the state's emerging shale oil and gas resources in Eastern Ohio, but more work remains to be done. Some recent estimates indicate that shale drilling could create at least 66,000 jobs in the state in the next few years and generate more than \$400 million in new state and local taxes.

Kasich said energy regulation will balance public safety against industry's need for quick responses.

The governor also said he hasn't always been happy with the approach used by some big energy companies to develop the state's shale reserves.

"We've not had all the cooperation we'd like," he said, without offering specifics. "These companies are good at lobbying, but we aren't going to let lobbyists get in the way of good public policy."

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