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Ohio picking up slack in energy policy

By John Kasich

John Kasich is governor of Ohio

Ohio's agriculture and manufacturing sectors are highly productive and among our state's largest employers. They're also big energy users and part of the reason why Ohio ranks seventh nationally in energy generation.

With energy being so important to major Ohio job creators, it's critical that we do everything possible to make it inexpensive, plentiful and reliable.

Unfortunately, Ohio faces major headwinds on energy from Washington. The U.S. lacks the kind of comprehensive energy policy it takes to achieve energy independence and help job creators secure low prices and reliable supplies. Furthermore, coal — which supplies 86 percent of our electricity — irritates the current president, and his administration's EPA repeatedly threatens more red tape on Ohio's growing shale-oil-and-gas industry.

This uncertainty from Washington isn't sustainable for Ohio. If we want to see more Ohioans working again, we need to foster low costs and greater certainty in energy, and if we can't get it with help from Washington, then Ohio must seek it ourselves.

So last year, my administration worked with Ohio State University and Battelle to convene the Governor's 21st Century Energy & Economic Summit. Over two days, the summit brought together 50 panelists from business, government, academia and environmental groups and more than 1,000 attendees to discuss the latest, brightest thinking on energy. These conversations were the first step in helping Ohio's policymakers develop a comprehensive energy policy to support job creation. That work continued over the winter and produced a comprehensive plan covering the full range of Ohio energy issues. I'm proud to say I'm signing that plan into law on Monday.

A major focus of Ohio's new energy policy is oil-and-gas production in our state's Utica shale formations. With new technologies making it possible to tap oil, natural gas and natural-gas liquids in shale rock deep beneath the surface, the potential exists to

permanently lift the economy of eastern Ohio and turn Ohio into a major oil-and-gas producer. It's only smart to make sure that as this new industry comes on the scene, strong policies are in place that can help ensure its safety and success. Ohio's energy policy does that by modernizing our regulatory structure to protect the public, the environment and the industry's workers and to facilitate the industry's growth.

Op-ed continued

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