

**Testimony of Dean Monske, Regional Growth Partnership of NW Ohio**  
**House Public Utilities Committee**  
**April 25, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chairman Seitz and members of the Committee. I'm Dean Monske, Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Growth Partnership in NW Ohio. We are a %100 privately funded regional economic development group comprised of 60 Presidents and CEO's from some of the top companies in NW Ohio. We focus on sales, marketing and project management for 17 counties and also serve as the network partner for Jobs Ohio.

The mission of the RGP is to be the primary, private sector contributor to a collaborative regional economic development enterprise that drives growth in jobs, capital investment, and wealth in Northwest Ohio.

Let me first state that I realize this is a complicated issue and I am sure there are reasonable arguments on both sides. I am here today to make sure that the pieces I am responsible for are communicated with those making policy decisions.

There are a host of economic and growth factors influenced by the operations of Ohio's two nuclear plants – Davis-Besse, closest to us in Northwest Ohio, and the Perry Plant in Northeast Ohio. Among those that are of most interest to my organization are the jobs, associated local taxes and the abundant, environmentally friendly electricity that helps make our region attractive to new business development.

Continued operation of the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear power stations will require more than 1,400 stable and well-paying jobs. That number includes only the direct full-time jobs at those plants. When secondary jobs are added the number surpasses 4,300. The regional impacts include hundreds of additional jobs involving maintenance work completed during outages,

These jobs and associated facilities represent over \$24 million in state and local taxes. In Ottawa County alone, they generate \$11 million to the local community including \$1.7 million to the County and \$7.5 million to the local schools. Should Davis-Besse actually close, it would not be an overstatement to say the economic results to this part of our region would be devastating. It is also important to remind people that Ottawa County located on Lake Erie is one of Ohio's most important tourism areas and this type of economic devastation would certainly not be good for this important industry.

Community support is also another economic development driver in our region. Since 2007, support provided by FirstEnergy totaled more than \$24 million to local United Way chapters and \$32 million for other charitable organizations, grants and civic and trade organizations. These are real dollars that will be affected should these facilities close.

In addition to the jobs and related economic impacts, the state experiences significant environmental benefits from plant operations, including avoided carbon dioxide and other emissions. Increasing emissions has the potential for a very real impact on air quality – and for increasing the number of nonattainment zones in our state. Creating additional nonattainment areas discourages new business growth and industrial development. As such, the environmental value of the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants confers competitive advantages as Ohio continues to rebound from the 2008 recession.

All these potential items are not just hypothetical. Very real examples of economic and environmental changes following nuclear plant closures can be found across the country:

- The U.S. Commerce Department reported a 7.5 percent loss in gross domestic product for the Homosassa Springs, Florida metro area in 2014 –

which directly correlates with the closure of the Crystal River Nuclear Plant. The loss was the worst decline among the 382 largest US metro areas studied that year.

- A University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute report determined that the loss of Vermont Yankee's nearly 600 employees results in an additional 669 job losses at nearby restaurants, retail outlets, real estate services and other local businesses. That study doesn't even consider the losses at businesses across the state that directly supported the plant.

I will close with my single largest concern surrounding this entire issue. For the last 10 years the Regional Growth Partnership has spent a great amount of time and resources building relationships with site location consultants around the country. These are the firms that help companies decide where their next investment, facilities and associated new jobs will locate. They are referred to as site selectors in the industry but are really more in the business of site eliminators. Their job is all about finding locations for their clients with the least amount of risk and uncertainty. If these nuclear plants ultimately close, it won't matter to the consultants who was most accurate in their prediction of the real world outcome, all they will know is that Ohio now has a much more uncertain future pursuant to the power their clients need.

Thank you very much for your time.