

TESTIMONY BY HARVEY WASSERMAN**RADIO HOST; COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR; VOTING MEMBER, GREENPEACE USA****AUTHOR OF *SOLARTOPIA: OUR GREEN-POWERED EARTH*****BEXLEY RESIDENT**

Ohio NOW has a unique opportunity create more than 20,000 jobs by offering low-interest loans equivalent to the proposed bailout of its obsolete nuclear reactors at Perry and Davis-Besse.

FirstEnergy's attempt to take billions of dollars from Ohio ratepayers in the name of "Zero Emission" nuke power is terribly misguided and will cripple our economy for decades to come.

Instead the money should go to build "Buffalo Billion"-style gigafactories which create some 5,000 jobs each. Two are being constructed now by Tesla/Solar City, one each in Buffalo and Nevada. We need them in Toledo and Mentor to guarantee our future. This won't happen if the bailout takes away those resources.

The low-interest loans can be paid back and cost Ohioans nothing, as opposed to these bailouts which could harm the state economy.

A phase-out plan in California can serve as a model. Pacific Gas & Electric will shut its two reactors at Diablo Canyon. PG&E has acknowledged the power can be entirely produced by renewables. In cooperation with the state, the unions and a coalition of environmental groups, there will be a "retain and retrain" program for the workers, and compensation to local communities for tax losses.

In Ohio, 1999, FirstEnergy utility took a staggering \$9 billion in "stranded costs" for the uninsured Perry and Davis-Besse nukes. With market deregulation, the reactors could not compete otherwise.

Now FE says its dying nukes need still more hand-outs because they can't compete with natural gas or wind and solar.

It's outrageous. FirstEnergy intends to sell these two nukes (plus Beaver Valley, in Pennsylvania) and wants to pump up their sale price at public expense.

Far from being "Zero Emission," they all spew huge quantities of hot water and steam into the biosphere. They constantly emit lethal radiation. Significant carbon dioxide is generated to produce reactor fuel.

Every ounce of their radioactive waste could sit in Ohio forever. The one operating US nuke waste dump (WIPP in New Mexico) exploded in 2014 and shut for three years, costing \$2 billion and irradiating 21 workers. To open Nevada's Yucca Mountain for high-level waste would cost at least \$90 billion and take at least a decade to finish.

Perry was the first US reactor to be seriously damaged by an earthquake. Davis-Besse has a uniquely shameful history of dangerous accidents. Its shield building is literally crumbling, posing a clear and present danger to the entire north coast.

Construction on these obsolete reactors began more than forty years ago. They were designed even earlier. Every day they grow more dangerous.

FirstEnergy claims concern over lost jobs. But Tesla gigafactories are now being built in Nevada for batteries and in Buffalo for solar panels. Each costs about a billion and creates 5,000 jobs. So for \$4.5 billion Ohio could fund four giga-factories, create 20,000 jobs and join the 21st century with the renewable technologies that will allow us to compete in the green energy revolution that is sweeping the world.

Germany, the world's fourth-largest economy, has already shut half its nukes and will have the rest down by 2020. Its transformation to 100% renewables is ahead of schedule and under budget. Its biggest "problem" is that the grid there is often flooded with cheap, clean, job-creating electricity generated by wind and solar.

Other countries like Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland and Costa Rica are headed in the same direction. California, with the world's sixth-largest economy, is replacing its two remaining reactors with 100% renewables. In an agreement with local unions, it will "retain and retrain" site workers, moving many into green jobs. It will subsidize local communities to ease the shock of losing tax revenues. California's installed rooftop solar already matches the capacity of five large atomic reactors.

Had the \$9 billion FE gouged out of Ohio ratepayers in 1999 gone to modern, job-creating safe energy technologies, many Ohioans currently without jobs would be gainfully employed.

Ohio has unique proven wind resources along the north coast and in the lake. Our solar exposure is similar to Germany's, where the industry is booming. With advanced batteries, LED lighting, geothermal and other green technologies, Ohio's job-producing energy future would be bright.

But dumping another \$4.5 billion into FE's pockets would bury Ohio in the radioactive failure of a bygone century. Those reactors are obsolete, uncompetitive, and will shut soon no matter what.

Investing in the green tech revolution is the only way out of the Rust Belt and into the modern world. It would be a terrible tragedy if Ohio's repeats its absurdly expensive nuclear mistakes.

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