



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Chair Nino Vitale
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Becky Campbell
Manager of Government Affairs, First Solar, Inc.

May 7, 2019

Chair Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Becky Campbell and I'm the Manager of Government Affairs at First Solar. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent to Ohio House Bill 6.

First Solar is a global provider of comprehensive photovoltaic (PV) solar energy solutions, with more than 200 million solar panels deployed globally. We are the largest and one of the last remaining U.S.-based solar panel manufacturers. We broke ground on our first Perrysburg facility in 1999 and through increased automation, upgrades and expansion, First Solar's Perrysburg manufacturing operations now span more than 1,000,000 square feet, with an annual capacity of 600 MW and employs more than 1,250 associates.

First Solar appreciates this bill's intent to support carbon-free energy sources and provide long-term rate stability for Ohioans. However, as a representative of the largest manufacturer, one of the largest utility-scale solar project developers in the country and a company that is actively working to build solar projects in Ohio, I want to caution that HB6, as currently written, will reduce business certainty and thus deployment of in-state renewable energy. If adopted, the bill's elimination of the AEPS would signal to project developers and investors that OH is turning its back on renewable energy instead of encouraging the growth of the fastest growing source of clean energy in the country. For this reason, First Solar is opposed to the current Substitute version of HB6.

First Solar was founded by Ohioan Harold McMaster and born in Perrysburg, Ohio. We've invested and innovated here for more than two decades. During this time, most U.S. solar manufacturers shrank, failed or left the U.S. due to intense competition – primarily from heavily subsidized Chinese manufacturers. However, First Solar has tripled down on its commitment to Ohio and continues to invest in its R&D and manufacturing efforts in this market. Since the company's birth, we've contributed well over \$3 billion to Ohio's economy.

Over the past three years we have made substantial investments in Ohio, first investing \$400 million to rapidly accelerate development and production of our next-generation Series 6 module



at our existing Perrysburg facility. Then, last summer we proudly broke ground on a new manufacturing facility in Lake Township. This \$400 million facility will begin producing solar panels late this year and will allow First Solar to triple its U.S. manufacturing capacity, creating 500 full-time jobs with an estimated annual payroll of \$30 million. These investments are critical to keeping advanced manufacturing in Ohio competitive with Chinese and other foreign manufacturers.

Our growth is also enabling the expansion of our Ohio supply chain partners. For example, last fall, as a direct result of First Solar's announced expansion, NSG Pilkington announced the construction of its first new U.S. float glass facility in nearly 40 years. Pilkington's new facility will be located in Troy Township, just 10 miles from First Solar's expansion and the company has publicly stated that this new facility is largely possible because of First Solar's sustained demand for their products.

Preserving the current AEPS will provide renewable developers, like First Solar, the market certainty that they need to continue making large, in-state development investments in Ohio. The AEPS is a market-driven policy mechanism that works and is already generating significant interest in in-state renewable energy development. On the other hand, the proposed construct for the Ohio Clean Air Program will not provide similar market confidence. Because it is unclear how projects would be prioritized for funding or how funds would be allocated if demand exceeds availability, a move away from the existing AEPS and towards the Ohio Clean Air Program will cause companies like First Solar to reconsider their development strategies in this market.

Additionally, First Solar requests inclusion of provisions that would better define the term "need" from a regulatory perspective. There are currently 400 MW of solar projects in Highland County that are sitting in regulatory limbo based on the interpretation of this single word. These projects represent hundreds of millions of dollars of investment and are projected to create more than 100 permanent full-time jobs for the region as well as 500 full-time union jobs during construction. These projects would achieve one of the stated goals of HB6: they represent **incremental in-state, carbon-free energy generation**. We request this Committee consider including a clear definition of "need" in HB6. We further recommend that definition should include:

1. in-state generation resources,
2. that demonstrate lifetime ratepayer savings,
3. and provide long-term rate stability.

AEP has already demonstrated that the two projects that it currently has under regulatory review would meet these conditions.



I appreciate that efforts are ongoing to improve this bill, but First Solar remains opposed the Substitute version of House Bill 6. Should the authors want to ensure the bill is successful in accomplishing its stated goal to “encourage electricity production and use from clean air resources,” First Solar stands ready and willing to work with the authors to develop the necessary amendments to make sure that is the case.

First Solar is proud to manufacture our advanced thin film solar modules in Ohio, and looks forward to further investing in this market by deploying our Ohio-manufactured solar panels in the ground across the state. As the largest U.S.-based manufacturer, First Solar hopes Ohio will work towards a sustainable and growing market for utility-scale solar.

I appreciate your time and consideration today and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Campbell".

Becky Campbell
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