

Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my written testimony. My name is Michelle Lemaitre. I am an Electrical Maintenance Supervisor at the Gavin Power Plant located in Gallia County. I live near Albany in Meigs County.

My power generation career started over 30 years ago when I moved to Ohio and put my electrical engineering degree to work as a Performance Engineer at a power plant. Since then, I've had the opportunity to fill many roles in Engineering, Operations, and Maintenance at power plants in various parts of Ohio and surrounding states. I also had the opportunity to provide engineering support to power plants all over the United States, as well as parts of Canada, Mexico, and SE Asia when working for an Ohio based company that makes products for the power generation industry.

Ever since the initial discussions about Ohio deregulation started in 1999, my coworkers and I have been there on the front lines, taking the uncomfortable but necessary steps to transform Ohio's power generators from regulated utility plants, guaranteed to make a profit, to a reliable fleet of smart, lean, environmentally conscious power producing machines.

It hasn't been easy; change rarely is, even when it's for the better. I've witnessed many co-workers get downsized over the years, and was devastated to find out one day that my entire engineering group was being eliminated. Many of the plants I've worked at no longer exist. Our plant does not have 700 employees like Davis Bessie. We have just over 200 employees and generate 3 times as much power.

As the power generation industry continues to evolve, competition eliminates all but the best and brightest. The remaining plants (like ours) employ nimble, forward thinking innovators who continue to look for ways to improve. Environmental stewards, keeping safety as goal number one, we all *know* if we're not profitable, we won't be around long.

That being said, deregulation in Ohio is working! Ohio's deregulated market is providing its customers with lower prices, reliability, and choice. After all the struggles the industry has been through to get here, it just doesn't make sense to grant the nuclear plants (or anyone else) a free pass, and permit them to continue to operate despite a poor business model and inability to make a profit.

Other power plants in Ohio would be placed at a serious competitive disadvantage if Ohio's inefficient nuclear plants are awarded a subsidy. It would be a slap in the face to the power producers in our state (like my colleagues and me) who are struggling to survive in a very competitive market, and working hard to provide inexpensive, reliable power to their customers. If House Bill 6 passes, more efficient, environmentally conscious power plants in Ohio could be forced to close, simply because their Northern competitors were given an unfair leg up.

If power plants like ours in Southeastern Ohio are edged out of the market, it would be devastating to our part of Appalachia where jobs and industry are already scarce. Residents of Southeast Ohio count heavily on tax revenue, jobs, and service industries that local power producers provide. Frankly, we're nearly all they have left. That is certainly not the case in Northern Ohio.

But I'm not here to selfishly claim that preserving my job is more important than preserving someone else's job. This issue is much bigger than that. It's about doing what's right for *all* of Ohio by continuing along the path we've already committed by law to follow. Please allow the deregulated market to continue to decide who the winners and losers will be, without government interference or unfair special deals.

Thank you.