

**Opponent testimony House Bill 6**  
**House Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**May 8, 2019**

Chairman Vitale and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Cathy Cowan Becker, and I am a Sierra Club volunteer who chairs the Ready for 100 campaign in Columbus and statewide. Today I am testifying on behalf of myself as an Ohio citizen, not on behalf of Sierra Club.

I am here to oppose House Bill 6. Masquerading as clean energy legislation, House Bill 6 would do three terrible things. First, it would repeal Ohio's renewable portfolio standards. Ohio's RPS is a modest program that requires the state to produce only 12.5% of energy from renewable sources by 2027. Our renewable energy standards should be strengthened, not repealed.

You have no doubt heard that the world's climate scientists have stated that we must cut carbon emissions in half by 2030 and to zero by 2050 if we are to have a chance of a livable planet. Ohio is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. How will doing away with our renewable energy standards help us address the climate crisis?

Ohio historically has been the cradle of innovation, yet other states are way ahead of us on renewable energy. So far, six states have committed to sourcing all of their energy from 100% renewable sources by 2050 or before. Recently Illinois's governor pledged to do the same.

Instead of moving backwards, Ohio should move forward to make our renewable energy standards in line with what science says is needed. Doing so would bring jobs and investments to our state.

The fastest-growing jobs in the country, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, are wind turbine technician and solar panel installer. Right now there are more than 3 million clean energy jobs nationwide, with more than 112,000 jobs in Ohio. Doing away with our renewable energy standards will put the jobs we have at risk and drive new jobs into other states.

Increasing wind energy in the state to 3,000 MW could bring \$4.2 billion in investments and create 1,000 additional jobs. Increasing utility scale solar to 1,200 MW and small-scale solar to 950 MW could bring in another \$1 billion in investments and create up to 2,500 jobs.

The second terrible thing House Bill 6 would do is repeal Ohio's energy efficiency standards. Energy efficiency is the "no brainer" of getting to the zero emissions economy that the science says we need to have a livable planet. Why? Because it saves money. The cheapest energy is the energy you never use, and our energy efficiency standards have saved Ohioans \$5.1 billion.

Like renewable energy, energy efficiency has also created jobs – 2.2 million nationwide and 70,000 in Ohio. It reduced carbon emissions by more than 1 million tons in 2017, cleaning the air and preventing tens of thousands of asthma attacks, heart attacks, and premature deaths.

For every \$1 spent on energy efficiency programs, Ohio businesses and residents get \$2.65 in benefits. Why would we want to get rid of such a successful program?

Finally, the third terrible thing House Bill 6 would do is force taxpayers across Ohio to bail out two old nuclear plants owned by First Energy Solutions, one with a history of serious safety violations. Taxpayers would pay to bail out two plants that otherwise would have been retired, whether or not they use any of the energy created by these plants. That makes no sense.

Currently Ohioans pay about 52 cents per month for the statewide benefits of our renewable energy and energy efficiency standards. Under House Bill 6, the cost to Ohioans would quintuple to \$2.50 per month – half of which would go directly to First Energy. I'm not even a customer of First Energy, but I would be paying to bail out its two old nuclear plants. How is that fair?

Further, it is unclear what kind of other energy facilities would qualify to receive funding from my other \$1.25 per month. Municipal utility facilities would not qualify, giving them no incentive to build renewable energy that would directly benefit their own city residents.

The bill also gives the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority discretion to decertify any clean air or reduced emissions resource at any time if it “determines that certification is not in the public interest.” On what basis would such a determination be made? What would prevent the authority from simply decertifying every solar, wind, and geothermal facility in the state?

In conclusion, House Bill 6 would do three terrible things. It would repeal our renewable energy standards, driving jobs and investment into other states. It would repeal our energy efficiency standards, a highly successful program that has saved billions of dollars for Ohioans. And it would force people like me, who are not customers of First Energy, to pay for bailing out two of its old nuclear power plants that have a history of safety violations and were slated to be retired.

If House Bill 6 would actually create the amount of renewable energy that its proponents claim, then why do we need to repeal our current renewable energy and energy efficiency standards? We could strengthen these standards to 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050, and have no trouble meeting these goals. Other states are doing this. There's no reason Ohio can't too.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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