

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Nino Vitale
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Norman Robbins
Member, Power of Wind

May 7, 2019

Chair Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Norman Robbins, member of the Ohio Power of Wind organization.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak as an opponent to Ohio Substitute House Bill 6, and on behalf of Ohio's Power of Wind group.

I wish to make the case that if HB6 is not greatly further amended, it will affect Ohio's future for the worse.

First, let's look at Jobs:

Under HB6, 1400 jobs at nuclear power plants will be supported for perhaps 10 years, at the end of which the subsidy would again be requested, since there is no provision to retire the plants or to retrain current nuclear workers. Contrast this to jobs in energy efficiency (currently over 80,000, and adding 5,000 in 2018), which HB6 will cut off entirely by stopping energy efficiency funding.

HB6, by essentially cutting renewable portfolio standards, will threaten the 500 new jobs in renewable energy expected just this year alone, in addition to the nearly 10,000 existing jobs in this sector. Already, the House has knee-capped the wind industry in Ohio by imposing over-restrictive setback requirements. Unless this is reversed as part of HB6, Ohio will steadily lose wind-energy jobs to other states. Ohio has more companies involved in development or manufacture of wind products than any other state in the union. Why on earth would Ohio want to stifle these companies by imposing unreasonable setback restrictions?

Coal is steadily losing jobs and percentage of energy supply in Ohio: those workers need retraining, perhaps in wind, solar and efficiency if they're going to avoid ruin. Why isn't this in HB6?

Now let's talk about cost:

Under HB6, the need for subsidy of nuclear plants won't go away, because HB6 decreases renewables and efficiency, so at the end of 10 years we will still be using perhaps 20% nuclear, without renewable electricity to replace it. Yet wind and solar power, especially if coupled with new developments in energy storage and peak supply, are almost certain to be the least cost electricity source. Also, cutting out efficiency support, as HB6 does in effect, will remove support for the cheapest source of electricity— namely, reducing demand. Ohio's consumers will be stuck with an electricity mix of higher priced sources, with nuclear subsidy still adding to the bill.

And if this is not bad enough, the growing national concern about climate change is very likely to end up with a bipartisan carbon fee as the best remedy to reduce carbon emissions. A recent NBC/Wall St Journal poll found that 63% of Republicans think their party is “out of the mainstream” on climate change. Already, a bipartisan carbon fee proposal has surfaced in Congress. If in 10 years Ohio has mainly natural gas as its electricity source, the added carbon fee or costs for importing electricity would make Ohio consumers and our industry pay more.

To protect job development in energy efficiency and renewables, and to protect consumers and industry from high cost of electricity, HB6 must be amended:

1. By restoring and even strengthening Ohio's energy efficiency and renewable portfolio standards;
2. By restoring wind turbine setback standards to reasonable distances, in line with most other states; and
3. By setting a time-limit, at most 10 years, on nuclear subsidy, and including retraining of nuclear, coal and even some natural gas employees, so they are not stranded 10 years from now.

Thank you your time and consideration.