

Akshai Singh
Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
May 23rd, 2019

Chairman Vitale, Vice-Chair Kirk, Ranking member Denson, and to members of the Committee:

My name is Akshai Singh, and I am a Northeast Ohio resident, and have been for the last twenty years. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am testifying today as a FirstEnergy customer in opposition to the Substitute House Bill 6.

I studied at Case Western Reserve and completed undergrad and graduate degrees in economics and finance, respectively. I am a community organizer, and have worked in Northeast Ohio to expand economic opportunities for working families in our economically distressed region. I have primarily worked in the area of transportation, but having worked on energy issues for several years, including for the Ohio Council of Churches' project Interfaith Power and Light, I can say that HB 6 will harm Ohio families and ratepayers.

This bill would effectively gut Ohio's incredibly successful energy efficiency programs, which have saved Ohioans over \$5.1 billion according to the Public Utilities Commission. According to findings from the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in 2014, Ohio energy efficiency programs reported the 2nd lowest cost of energy saved in the nation (marginally, Illinois being lowest), at less than \$10 per MWh.

Ohio ratepayers should not be forced to subsidize FirstEnergy's struggling plants without submitting their full financial accounting with state regulators, and being demonstrated a severe financial distress. Providing heavily watered down 'zero emissions credits' is irresponsible to families, when there are such readily available energy efficiency resources that not only reduce individual bills, but overall market costs when bid into the PJM wholesale capacity markets.

While I would rather see Ohio's nuclear plants kept online rather than to be replaced with coal or gas, the energy credits cannot then go further to incentivize piecemeal reductions in emissions versus represent a clear step towards expanding Ohio's supply of wind and solar capacity. By limiting credits to utility-scale projects, the Statehouse would stymie billions of dollars in development. This bill goes further and creates new bureaucracy in the form of the Ohio Clean Air Board.

This kind of economic myopia in 2014, in the form of new wind turbine setback laws, deterred over \$1 billion in wind project development that could have benefitted Western Ohio communities the most, as the Blue Creek Wind Farm has to the communities of Van Wert and Paulding Counties in the form of local tax revenue. Ohio cannot continue to starve its most divested communities- I do not know any Ohioans who would prefer a fracking pad closer to their property line than a wind turbine (as is legally stipulated in Ohio Revised Code).

The first North American wind turbine was built on Euclid Avenue by Charles Brush in 1888, the first freshwater offshore wind turbines in North America will be built in Lake Erie, and have just been approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board, and as of 2013, Ohio supported over 170 companies in the wind and solar power supply chain. We must commit ourselves to building the clean energy systems demanded by the world in the 21st century. Ohio can be a global clean energy workshop, capable of mobilizing our economy to meeting the urgent demands of averting catastrophic climate change. This statehouse must commit to this path, and commit to opportunities for Ohio's future generations.

Thank you.