



*Ohio Sierra Club Nuclear Free Committee  
131 North High Street, Suite 605  
Columbus, OH 43215  
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Chair Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patricia Marida. I am the Chair of the Ohio Sierra Club Nuclear Free Committee. I speak in opposition to Substitute HB 6. HB 6 would give an obligation-free gift to FirstEnergy to keep operating their deteriorating Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants, poised on the shore of one of Ohio's greatest resources, Lake Erie.

I want to explain that nuclear power is not carbon free and it is not pollution free and it is not emissions free. It is true that the nuclear chain reaction itself, called nuclear fission, does not produce carbon. Nuclear fission produces heat, which is a very expensive and technologically complicated way to boil water. Electricity is but a fleeting byproduct of nuclear fission. The real product of nuclear power is forever-deadly radioactive waste.

Today I want to remind the committee about the carbon that is produced by nuclear power. Carbon is produced by all the industries that make fuel to run nuclear plants. One of the many processes needed to make nuclear fuel is uranium enrichment. Uranium enrichment went on for about 45 years at the Portsmouth Nuclear Site in Pike County, Ohio. Most people in this room have heard about the recent closing of the Zahn's Corner Middle School, which is near that nuclear site. The closure was due to radioactivity being found in an air monitor outside the school. Publicity has gone worldwide in many languages.

There is more than uranium at the Pike County nuclear site. For many years, the US Department of Energy brought reprocessed high-level radioactive waste to the site and ran it through the giant process buildings, contaminating the entire site with transuranics including plutonium and neptunium. These human-made elements are the most poisonous substances known to science. These elements are not restricted by the fences around the site, and have also been found in recent testing of dust in nearby attics and in sediments of Little Beaver Creek outside the site.

Five students at the school have contracted leukemia, and 3 have died. Radioactivity is well-known to cause disease, birth defects and genetic mutations generations far removed in time. Because of the time factor, there can only be a statistical link to any particular case. This latency factor has allowed nuclear power to go largely unidentified as the source of heart disease, genetic mutations and birth defects—but these are all health consequences that radioactivity is known to cause.

The Sierra Club wants to point out that what is happening in Pike County is part of the industry that fuels nuclear power. There are numerous other industries in the nuclear fuel chain. All of them, along with Davis-Besse and Perry, need to be closed now to prevent further accumulation of radioactive waste.

To elaborate more on the true cost of nuclear power, the Department of Energy is currently dismantling the buildings at the Piketon site and putting rubble into an On Site Disposal Facility. A recent article in the Columbus Dispatch puts an estimate of the cost of this remediation at \$18 billion. Debris that is more radioactive is shipped to Utah and Nevada, at great expense. The Sierra Club and local residents charge that the Waste Acceptance Criteria for the On Site Disposal Facility has holes that allow dangerous radioactivity to be disposed of onsite. Plentiful rainfall, along with cracked bedrock recently discovered under the disposal site, make this an unacceptable place to dispose of transuranic wastes.

Independent testing for radioactivity outside the Pike County site is currently being planned. Citizens are now advocating that similar testing be done around the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants.

Thank you very much to the members of this committee for your time and attention.