

House Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee
on Energy Generation
Chair Dick Stein and Chair Michael O'Brien
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 6
Testimony of Ariel Miller, volunteer, Ohio Interfaith Power and Light

April 23, 2019

Chair Stein, Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation, my name is Ariel Miller. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent to Ohio House Bill 6. I really appreciate your making time for citizen input on this bill!

I am a Christian from Cincinnati who spent my career as a reporter and consultant to Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Southern Ohio on effective solutions to poverty. Now retired, I am testifying today out of my religious and environmental concerns as a volunteer with Ohio Interfaith Power and Light.

I oppose HB 6 first out of concern that the new customer surcharge it will impose on Ohio consumers will increase the challenges they already face in trying – and often being unable – to meet basic survival needs including utility bills on their incomes. From 2004 to my retirement in 2013, I ran a foundation for the Episcopal Diocese that provided grants to many interfaith emergency assistance programs across the southern half of the state. The need for financial help to prevent utility shut-offs is enormous – generally exhausting the available dollars within a few days of the start of every month. This proposed new customer charge will only exacerbate the struggle families and elderly people face in deciding between heat and food.

According to PJM's analysis in 2018, First Energy's nuclear plants – as well as several coal-fired plants slated for closure – are not needed: our grid reliability will be sufficient without them.

To impose additional costs of Ohio's working poor and seniors on fixed incomes to bail out First Energy's aging nuclear plants would be unjust. This bill reminds me of the hard-hitting parable that the prophet Nathan presented to King David after David's successful conspiracy to have Uriah killed so David could take Uriah's wife, Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:1-6). Nathan talks of a rich man stealing a poor man's only sheep and David is forced to see the connection to his own behavior. Please vote against this bill.

I also hold a degree in health planning from the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins and am testifying out of decades of concern about the unsolved problem of how to safely contain high-level nuclear waste from nuclear power plants. My first child was a newborn and we were living just a few miles from Three Mile Island at the time of its nuclear accident in 1979. The risks and extreme costs associated with nuclear power plants make this a poor utility choice. Rather than propping up nuclear power, I ask you to continue Ohio's progress towards renewable energy by sustaining

the renewable energy standards passed by the Legislature a decade ago and removing unnecessary barriers to expansion of wind farms. I visited a wind farm in Van Wert County last spring and was delighted to hear from a local farmer that the revenue from the turbines was a great source of stability to her family's business, and that property taxes on the turbines were generating over \$800,000 a year in new revenue for her children's elementary school, which is now excellent.

I urge you to support policies that are win-win for Ohio's communities: energy conservation and the expansion of renewable energy, with the added benefit of new property tax on wind farms to help solve the chronic problem of inequitable funding of local public schools in rural areas.