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**Testimony on Behalf of the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation
April 23, 2019**

Dear Chairman Stein, Chairman O'Brien and Members of the Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation:

The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) is submitting testimony related to HB 6.

MEEA is a regional non-profit membership organization which serves as the Midwest's key proponent and resource for energy efficiency. MEEA covers 13 states in the Midwest, including Ohio, where 81 of our 160+ members have employees and provide services. Our members include investor-owned, cooperative and municipal utilities; energy efficiency service and technology providers; manufacturers; state and local government representatives; and, academic, advocacy and research organizations. MEEA serves as a nonpartisan resource to policymakers and does not lobby or intervene in regulatory proceedings. As the trusted source on energy efficiency in the Midwest, MEEA educates and advises a diverse set of stakeholders on new and meaningful ways to pursue an energy efficient agenda that's both achievable and cost-effective.

Executive Summary

Ohio has made significant investments through energy efficiency to reduce energy use and save all customers money. Unfortunately, HB 6 would effectively halt this forward progress. As currently written, HB 6 would change the status quo from customers participating in energy efficiency to a situation where all customers would be out of the program and have to opt-in. This not only would create burdensome procedures for participation for the individual customers, but also for the utility provider and Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. The mandated opt-in would, most likely, drastically reduce the number of participants and funding available for energy efficiency programs to the point that it would not be feasible or cost-effective to run programs. HB 6, as written, would ultimately end energy efficiency in Ohio.

HB 6 creates a \$2.50 surcharge for residential customers to finance Ohio's clean air program fund. This additional charge appears to be justification for eliminating the current Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) and

Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) surcharges in order to keep costs low for customers. Unfortunately, eliminating the EERS also eliminates the benefits to customers in exchange for benefits under HB 6 that are not very clear. In 2017, customers received \$2.65 in energy savings benefits for every \$1 they paid. Energy efficiency is required to be cost-effective and, historically, has had a return of at least \$2 for every \$1 invested in energy efficiency programs providing substantive benefits to Ohio ratepayers. Trading away the guaranteed rate of return that exists under the current EERS and replacing it with a policy that simply supports existing generation seems unbalanced.

A Strong Return on Investment

Ohio's electricity customers have cumulatively saved \$5.1 billion (as seen in Figure 1, below) since the beginning of Ohio's energy efficiency standard. From 2009 to 2017, Ohio's energy efficiency programs have saved over 49 million MWh of energy (as seen in Figure 2, below). Saving this much energy is enough electricity to power every home in Ohio for 10.5 months. This is also equivalent to powering every home in Columbus for almost 13 years or every home in Cleveland for 25 years.

Figure 1: Estimated electric bill savings from Ohio EE programs, 2009-2017

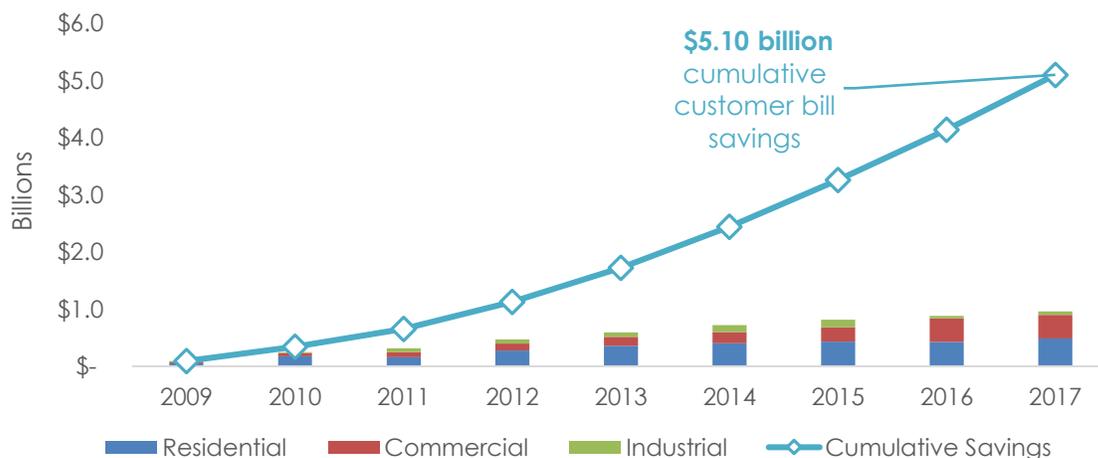
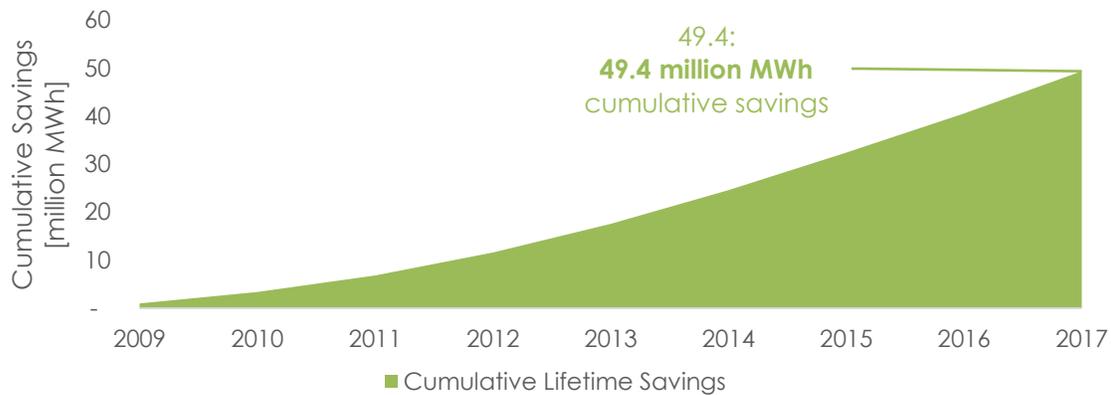


Figure 1: Cumulative lifetime electric savings from Ohio EE programs, 2009-2017



Ohio's EERS not only returns cost-effective benefits to residents and businesses, it is also a huge economic driver. The clean energy industry employs 112,486 workers in Ohio as of 2018. Of that, 81,676 are involved in the energy efficiency sector. That means 72% of Ohio's clean energy jobs are in energy efficiency. These are good, local jobs and include contractors that make HVAC upgrades, window replacements, switching out lighting and advanced heating controls like smart thermostats, as a few examples. What's more, energy efficiency jobs saw a 2.5% growth from 2017.

Energy efficiency programs can have initial costs and investments, but these program costs often decline over time, as program administrators become more experienced, leading to improved efficiencies. In Michigan, a 2018 report from the Public Service Commission showed that programs implemented that year were even more cost-effective than in previous years. That is why even during Ohio's two-year freeze of the EERS, utilities continued to run their energy efficiency programs because they knew in the long-run the benefits of continuing outweighed the costs of stopping and starting again. Ohio should maintain its forward progress.

Increased Participation Benefits All Customers

Some people claim that if energy efficiency saves money, businesses will do it on their own. However, outside research has found that most voluntary programs, including self-directed and opt-out programs, do not yield any measurable energy savings. That's because energy efficiency capital investments compete with other investments to improve productivity, and a company is likely to invest in core business functions before investing in energy efficiency. Further, business executives are not necessarily energy experts,



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meaning they might be unfamiliar with the work required to improve the energy efficiency of their operations. Energy efficiency investments create system-wide benefits that all customers receive. Therefore, all rate classes should participate and pay for this resource since everyone benefits.

Ohioans need not relitigate the statewide EERS for a sixth straight year. Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to meet our energy needs. It helps reduce costs for everyone—residents, small businesses and large commercial or industrial customers. Buckeyes deserve an energy policy that matches the modern 21st century economy, not policies that move Ohio backwards. MEEA will continue to serve as a resource for our members, policymakers and other stakeholders in Ohio and identify opportunities to promote energy efficiency.

These comments reflect the views of the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance – a Regional Energy Efficiency Organization as designated by the U.S. Department of Energy – and not the organization’s members or individual entities represented on our board of directors.