



**Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Energy Generation**

**Opponent Testimony HB 6
Neil Waggoner - Sierra Club
April 24, 2019**

Chairman Stein, Co-Chair O'Brien, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation. My name is Neil Waggoner and I am the Ohio Campaign Representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. Today I speak on behalf of the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Beyond Coal Campaign, and our over 20,000 members here in the great state of Ohio - a number of whom I believe you have already heard from and will continue to hear from moving forward. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony opposing HB 6.

To begin, the Sierra Club welcomes the opportunity for a real policy driven conversation around the impacts of carbon pollution and the need to reduce those emissions. As we are all aware, carbon pollution is the main contributor to climate disruption, making extreme weather worse -- including more severe floods, widespread wildfires and record drought. It is also linked to life-threatening air pollution—such as the smog that can trigger asthma attacks. Ohio has historically been a major contributor of carbon pollution so this discussion is incredibly important.

HB 6 and the policies therein, however, do not represent a serious attempt to actually lower carbon emissions. If anything, this short-sighted bill is likely to result in raising them.

At its heart, HB 6 is the latest attempt by FirstEnergy Solutions and its supporters to force Ohio electric customers to pay more each month to bail out the Company's old nuclear plants. I say latest as FirstEnergy and its affiliates have been seeking direct bailouts for these nuclear plants for years. First was Davis-Besse in 2014 at the PUCO. Later, that bailout push continued here at the legislature - now with the Perry plant as well - with an ill defined ZEN credit program. Consistently, these bailout attempts have been shown to be extremely expensive and faced overwhelming opposition from Ohioans.

At the same time, HB 6 is even more troubling and regressive than previous schemes to bail out a bankrupt company's uneconomic assets as the bill now seeks to go a step further than the earlier iterations of a bailout and gut Ohio's clean energy and energy efficiency standards. At a time when many states are undertaking efforts to increase their renewable energy and efficiency

commitments - far west coast elite states like Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois - it's baffling the Ohio House is fast tracking efforts to move us backwards and make us less competitive with our heartland cousins.

Since the renewable and efficiency standards were enacted a decade ago, they have faced near constant attempts to alter or repeal them, including a successful effort to amend and freeze them for a two year period in 2014. Despite the chaos and uncertainty of these consistent attacks, the standards have proven popular, successful, and major economic drivers, especially the energy efficiency resource standard.

As an example of this, according to the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, in 2017, every \$1 spent on energy efficiency programs has created \$2.65 in benefits for Ohio residents and businesses. In terms of reducing energy waste, the energy efficiency standard has reduced Ohio's need by over 49,372,000 megawatt hours saved to date. HB 6's bailout of Ohio's nuclear plants may maintain the status quo when it comes to those two plants but repealing the efficiency standard means there is no longer any policy mechanism in place setting clear annual goals - and cost effective mechanisms to achieve those goals - to continue to reduce energy waste.¹

Also as an example, the 2019 Clean Jobs Report shows an increasing number of Ohioans are working in the clean energy and energy efficiency sector - 112,486 by the end of 2018 to be exact; a 4.6% increase from 2017 to 2018. These are the jobs and the industry the renewable and energy efficiency standard support and they could be lost if the legislature repeals them.²

There is an opportunity in front of the legislature. Ohio has not had a comprehensive, consistent energy policy for years and starting with ideas to reduce carbon is a good first step. However, if we are serious about the need to reduce carbon emissions, HB 6 is not the answer. It bails out costly nuclear plants at the expense of low-cost, truly carbon-free energy like wind, solar and energy efficiency. If the legislature eliminates ongoing successful policy mechanisms that support clean energy and reduce energy waste, Ohio's carbon emissions will go up -- not down.

For these reasons, Sierra Club stands with the numerous opponents - a wide swath of energy, consumer, environmental, and normal every day Ohioans - and urge the Subcommittee to vote NO on HB 6. Instead, we encourage the Subcommittee to pursue a true comprehensive energy agenda with a focus on how to increase investment in energy efficiency, expand clean energy development, and to also support communities disproportionately impacted by the transition away from, and retirement of, dirty energy generation.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to answering the Subcommittee's questions.

¹ [Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance Ohio Factsheet](#)

² [2019 Clean Jobs Midwest Report: Ohio](#)