

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 Tom Schock  
Retired resident of North Olmsted in Cuyahoga County  
April 24, 2019

Chair Stein, Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation, my name is Tom Schock. I am a retired land developer from North Olmsted, Ohio in Cuyahoga County Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent to Ohio House Bill 6.

The problem I have with this bill is that it is short sighted and will actually result in a loss of jobs for Ohioans. In the rush to pass this bill, the Ohio House is missing the bigger picture. Yes, clean air is important and we all need a dependable source of electricity, but House Bill 6 mainly benefits Ohio's two nuclear power plants. Will nuclear power be the answer for our energy? Is it the most economical and safest power for Ohio's future?

The Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant came on-line in 1978 and the original operating license was set to expire in 2017. Over the past 40 years, it has had numerous safety violations, including the discovery of a football-sized hole that had eaten into the head of the reactor vessel in 2002. According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Davis-Besse has been the source of two of the top five most dangerous nuclear incidents in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Should Ohio taxpayers write a blank check for these two aging plants that have exceeded their life expectancy and subsidize these plants indefinitely into the future? If not nuclear, then what? With all the concern about pollution and a warming planet, does coal have a future in Ohio? I think not. Does Ohio want to rely only on natural gas for all our power needs or is there a better way?

With the rapid advances in wind and solar technology, they are now the cheapest form of unsubsidized power to produce. That's right, wind and solar farms are even less expensive than natural gas. I have a chart here that I will include with my testimony produced by Lazard, who is the largest privately held investment bank in the world. The chart shows the cost to produce various forms of energy. Clearly, wind and solar are the least expensive form of energy to produce. Why? One reason is the costs have dropped substantially in the last 10 years - 69% for wind and 88% for solar. Secondly, once the solar panels or wind turbines are in place, there is no cost for the fuel; the wind and sun are free!

I am sure many of you are thinking that renewable are heavily subsidized and that cannot be true, but look at how many companies are converting to 100% renewable – General Motors, Wal-Mart, Microsoft, Amazon, ...the list goes on. Ask yourself why do these companies, some of the most successful in the world, want to convert to renewable energy? It is because of the lower costs and the ability to fix the price of the electricity for up to 30 years. If Ohio does not strongly encourage the growth of renewable, it will not attract these companies that want only renewable power.

So does HB 6 encourage this transition? No, it excludes solar farms less than 50 MW (which is many community based and small solar projects) and excludes municipal utilities (Icebreaker Wind is excluded). The bill does nothing to fix the onerous wind turbine setbacks that were changed in 2014. These setbacks are some of the most restrictive in the country and have crippled the wind industry in Ohio. Finally House bill 6 eliminates the Energy Efficiency Resource Standards that have resulted in **over \$5.1 Billion in savings for Ohioans between 2009 and 2017 and the creation of over 81,000 jobs.**

How can the Legislature fix the bill so that it will be better for Ohio going into the future?

- 1) Place a time limit on the subsidy to FirstEnergy to allow for a transition to a more sustainable and safer future. Let's use the next five years to orderly phase out Ohio's nuclear plants and build the solar and wind farms needed for a more balanced and less expensive energy mix;
- 2) Return the wind turbine setbacks to the pre-2014 levels. Those setbacks resulted in the Blue Creek and Timber Road Wind Farms which have generated millions for schools, local governments and land lease payments to farmers. At the time the revised setbacks were put in place, there were 17 wind farms in various stages of development which would have brought \$4.2 billion in economic activity to the state along with creating 13,000 jobs. Since 2014, no new wind farms have been proposed. Ohio has a tremendous wind resource and it is time we take advantage of it!
- 3) Keep the Energy Efficiency Standards. Per **the Ohio Administrative Code, energy efficiency programs must be more beneficial than the cost. This means that energy efficiency programs proposed by utilities are only approved if they are cost-effective. For every \$1 spend, Ohioans have received \$2.65 in savings under the Energy Efficiency Resource Standards.**

These three changes to HB 6:

- 1) A five year time limit on the \$2.50 charge on residential electric bills;
- 2) A return to the pre 2014 wind turbine setback from a property line and;
- 3) Retaining the Energy Efficiency Resource Standards;

will return Ohio to a path of energy and job growth; create a means for a transition to a cleaner, more sustainable future; and greatly enhance the chances for the bill's passage in the Ohio House and Senate and acceptance by all Ohioans.

I thank you for your time and consideration of my suggestions today.

Have a good afternoon.

Tom Schock