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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 Rachael Estes, Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs
Apex Clean Energy

April 24, 2019

Chair Stein, Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation, my name is Rachael Estes and I am Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager for Apex Clean Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to share our company's concerns about Ohio House Bill 6.

We are a Virginia-based renewable energy company that has commercialized \$4.5 billion in renewable energy projects and has 15 GW under development across the country. We currently have three wind projects in development in northern Ohio that, in total, would provide over 800 MW of clean, carbon-free energy. These projects represent a combined \$320 million investment that would create 365 jobs in Ohio.

Ohio is blessed with a natural abundance of wind. By harnessing this resource, Ohio has an incredible opportunity to create well-paying jobs, raise revenue, and reduce its carbon footprint, all while keeping energy prices low. Already, there are nearly 10,000 Ohioans working in the renewable energy industry, and with a supportive regulatory environment, that number could continue to grow.

The State of Ohio represents the highest number of wind-related manufacturing plants in the country, with more than 60 facilities across the state.¹ Therefore, any investment in wind development creates more jobs and more revenue for the state's manufacturing industry.

Ten years ago, after recognizing the need to reduce carbon emissions, the Ohio Legislature passed the "Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard" (AEPS). However, in 2014, the legislature halted all progress and froze the standard for two years. The standard resumed just two years ago, and now this bill seeks to repeal the program completely. In addition, the legislature passed HB483 in 2014, which placed overly burdensome regulations on wind development, causing a halt to nearly all development activity in Ohio. In contrast, wind generation has soared across the country writ large, generating nearly 7% of American electricity last year and providing over 20% of electricity in six states.²

Each year, wind projects pay more than \$1 billion to state and local governments and private landowners.³ Ohio's start/stop policy harms not only the renewable energy industry, but also the local communities who are losing out on millions of dollars of investments, local jobs, and tax revenue. Our industry's development projects have strong economic ripple effects throughout

communities, from county tax revenue and landowner lease payments to local construction jobs, vendor fairs, and restaurant and hotel occupancy. Paulding County, which has seen \$700 million in renewable energy investments since 2013, actually received a boost in its bond rating from an A1 to an Aa3 by Moody's Investor Service.⁴

When government keeps changing the rules and moving the goal posts, it hurts both the industry and the entire economy, preventing innovation and growth. In its current form, HB6 reverses the regulatory certainty developers and investors relied on to make business decisions and investments in Ohio.

We wholeheartedly support an effort to move Ohio toward a cleaner energy future and would be happy to work with the legislature to help plan for a such a time—but as renewable energy developers, we believe HB6 will hinder, not help, Ohio's transition to clean power.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on HB6 and would welcome an open dialogue moving forward to ensure a prosperous and robust renewable energy future in Ohio.

Thank you,

Rachael Estes
Manager, Government and Regulatory Affairs
Apex Clean Energy

¹ <https://www.aweablog.org/whats-state-american-wind-power-manufacturing/>

² <https://www.awea.org/wind-101/basics-of-wind-energy/wind-facts-at-a-glance>

³ <https://www.awea.org/wind-101/basics-of-wind-energy/wind-facts-at-a-glance>

⁴ https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-upgrades-Paulding-County-OHs-GO-to-Aa3--PR_905632179