



Ohio Citizen Action

The premier grassroots mobilizing and organizing team in the Midwest

Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
Chair Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Melissa K. English
Deputy Director, Ohio Citizen Action

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Chair Wilson, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Energy & Public Utilities Committee, my name is Melissa English and I'm the Deputy Director of Ohio Citizen Action. I thank you for the opportunity to present our opposition to Ohio House Bill 6.

I speak to you today on behalf of Ohio Citizen Action's 32,000 members and all Ohio utility ratepayers who have a stake in the decision before you. Ohio Citizen Action has fought for government accountability and public interest issues, including fair utility rates, since the mid-1970s. We oppose HB 6 because it puts an unfair burden on the many Ohioans who don't pay FirstEnergy for their electricity, perpetuating a pattern of externalizing costs to consumers that should appropriately be borne by shareholders. We also oppose HB 6 because it sweeps aside programs that do serve the public interest, namely Ohio's modest energy efficiency and renewable energy standards, in order to subsidize a company that has glutted itself on \$11 billion in bailouts since 1999. Furthermore, we object to including money for propping up the two antique OVEC coal plants in a so-called "clean air bill".

Ohio Citizen Action prides itself as the premier grassroots mobilizing and organizing team in the Midwest. We get out into communities across Ohio 52 weeks per year, educating and organizing on environmental and consumer issues. I was a field canvasser myself and I can tell you that Ohioans know what's in their interest and what is not. When we knock on doors, we ask people to take action on the issue we share with them, usually it's a letter or a phone call, every one of which we collect or observe and document. I'm proud to say that just since we've begun working on the bailout, **6,964** Ohioans have called or written letters to legislators or the governor opposing the bill. Those people can't leave their jobs and

responsibilities to appear before you today. But those people have read editorials about HB 6 in their newspapers, seen the ads on their evening news broadcasts and opened mailers paid for by Generation Now. I assure you, they're paying attention to this issue and know what it's about.

To sum up, we question the assertion that HB6 is the best investment Ohio could make to improve air quality and save consumers money. We oppose gutting the state's renewable energy and efficiency programs which actually do improve air quality and save consumers money. We oppose spreading the pain of FirstEnergy's poor business decisions to all Ohio ratepayers. And we urge the members of this committee to vote against HB 6.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.