



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Chairman Steve Wilson  
Opponent Testimony on Senate Substitute House Bill 6  
Testimony of Tom Bullock  
Ohio Representative, Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy

June 27, 2019

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Tom Bullock, and I submit testimony today as Ohio Representative for the Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an opponent to Senate Substitute House Bill 6.

**Feedback on Senate Substitute HB 6:**

I'd like to thank the Committee for its thoughtfulness and balance in writing Senate Substitute HB 6 and to acknowledge the significant and valuable changes made to it. This testimony flags several remaining matters to correct. If addressed before the it is reported out of Committee, the improvements related to renewable energy would be on an even stronger footing.

First, the removal of the township referendum provisions targeting wind farms is a significant improvement to Senate Substitute HB 6 that we strongly support. Retaining it would be unfair, result in termination of many wind projects, and would set a very problematic precedent.

Second, improvements to wind farm siting rules would be even stronger if Senate Substitute HB 6 restored reasonable wind siting regulations that would allow companies to develop wind projects that will benefit local communities, rather than the draconian standards passed into Ohio law by a last-minute 2014 budget adopted with no public testimony or deliberation.

Third, the retention of Ohio's RPS in Senate Substitute HB 6 is an essential, important improvement. It is problematic that the RPS would be weakened by about a third, and it is worth noting that many other states have far higher targets for renewables even before the Senate Substitute bill proposes to weaken it. If the Committee kept RPS targets at current levels, the benefits to Ohio's economy would be greater.

**Fourth, Senate Substitute HB 6 contains a very problematic measure that it is essential to correct before the bill is reported out of Committee: namely, the elimination of the "each calendar year thereafter" requirement to maintain RPS target levels. This provision will negatively impacts the ability to finance projects needed to satisfy the RPS.**

- Explanation: The RPS is designed to diversify the state’s energy portfolio. It reaches a peak, and then holds steady at that level by requiring the utilities to maintain that level of renewable energy “each calendar year thereafter.” The Senate bill eliminates that language, creating a “cliff” effect, where utilities achieve 8.5% renewables, and then can go to zero the following year. In the years leading to the “cliff,” the utilities have no incentive to sign long terms, financeable energy deals because the compliance obligation vanishes.

Finally, the Energy Generation Fund charges to commercial customers seems to create a multiple-billing cost for businesses with multiple meters. This could create extra charges that would be excessive and unfair to the businesses that chambers of commerce represent.

### **Background:**

Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy (CICE) is a nationwide network of local chambers from every state in the nation. We help local chambers of commerce and their member companies navigate and prosper in the clean energy space. Founded by local chamber executives, CICE's Advisory Council is comprised of chamber CEOs and senior staff. We are one of the largest local chamber organizations in the country, with 1,200 chambers in our network representing some 900,000 businesses. In Ohio, we have nearly 300 chambers representing more than 70,000 businesses.

### **Chamber letter supporting continued renewable energy development**

I once again attach, as in my June 18 testimony to the Committee, a letter cosigned by eleven chamber leaders, economic development officials, and community stakeholders, requesting your strong support of clean, renewable energy development as our state considers any energy policy. The letter states:

“As chambers, economic development officials, and community leaders, we have seen or anticipate significant benefits from renewable clean energy projects to our businesses, schools, communities, and the economy of this great state. We have also seen how energy efficiency improvements to buildings and facilities have saved funds and made businesses more competitive.”

These benefits are quite significant indeed: Renewable energy projects such as wind (and, increasingly, solar) are the greatest opportunity for economic growth in many rural Ohio, courthouse communities. For several of our member chambers, there is no greater investment for their local economies than wind farm development. Wind farms are the number one source of tax revenue in Paulding and Van Wert Counties, providing impressive new tax revenue for schools, new income for area landowners, and new revenues for local businesses who supply goods and services to the wind energy companies. In addition, wind has brought jobs: both temporary jobs during construction and permanent technician jobs filled by highly-paid, highly-trained staff.

Wind and solar jobs combined with other clean energy positions, such as energy efficiency and supply chain manufacturing, have delivered more than 112,000 jobs to our state. Still more economic activity derives from attracting national corporations' facilities to Ohio, such as data and fulfillment centers: access to renewable energy is frequently a top site selection priority for Fortune 500 companies. Ohio must compete for—and win—those jobs in today's knowledge-driven economy. Ohio chambers of commerce, economic development offices and community stakeholders work very hard to attract employers and investment, and we must not lose points in site selectors' evaluations due to inadequate supplies of in-state clean power generation.

For these reasons, we believe there is a need to retain, not dismantle, standards that have successfully provided long-term, market-based investment signals. In addition, the state should remove roadblocks and cumbersome development regulations that stand in the way of projects: namely, the highest-in-the-Midwest, development-chilling wind setback regulations put in place in 2014. Together, these would create a clear and consistent roadmap to encourage renewable energy development.

We therefore urge that as part of any actions you take regarding energy policy, you:

1. retain the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) and oppose any attempt to weaken them; and
2. restore reasonable wind siting standards that will encourage companies to continue to develop wind projects that will benefit our local communities.

I appreciate your consideration, and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

*Attachment: Chamber-ED-Schools-County HB 6 Letter*

May 8, 2019

Dear Governor DeWine, Senate President Obhof, and Speaker Householder:

Local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations are at the forefront of advocating for the economic growth of our communities, and in the era of cost-competitive, global competition, we recognize that energy is an increasingly important issue for our local businesses.

**As chambers, economic development officials, and community leaders, we have seen or anticipate significant benefits from renewable clean energy projects to our businesses, schools, communities, and the economy** of this great state. We have also seen how energy efficiency improvements to building and facilities have saved funds and made businesses more competitive.

For future growth, **Ohio needs to take full advantage of this fast-growing sector that's delivered more than 112,000 new jobs and billions in investment** to our state. Additionally, access to renewable energy is often a top site selection priority for Fortune 100 and 500 companies.

With this in mind, we believe there is a need for a clear and consistent roadmap on this issue to **encourage renewable clean energy development, not roadblocks or burdensome development regulations.**

That is why we encourage you, as part of any actions you take regarding energy policy, to (1) **retain the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)** and oppose any attempt to weaken them; and (2) **restore reasonable wind siting** regulations that will **allow companies to develop wind projects that will benefit our local communities.**

Let's work together to help the Buckeye State continue to lead in attracting renewable energy investment and employment—and not surrender that role to neighboring states.

Respectfully,

Mikayla Pieper  
Executive Director, Paulding Chamber of Commerce

Jed Metzger  
President & CEO, Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce

Shirley Dyer  
Executive Director, Greater Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce

Nathan Strum  
Director of Economic Development, Licking County Chamber of Commerce,  
Executive Director, Grow Licking County

Matt Gilroy  
Executive Director, Fulton County Economic Development Corporation

Jeff Snyder  
Superintendent, Lincolnview Local Schools

Rick Turner  
Superintendent, Vantage Career Center

Benjamin A. Winans  
Superintendent, Wayne Trace School Local District

Dr. Martin Miller  
Superintendent, Antwerp Local Schools

Ken Amstutz  
Superintendent, Paulding Exempted Village Schools

Holly Stacy  
Commissioner, Seneca County

