

**Testimony of Ottawa County EMA Director Fred Petersen
Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee
June 1, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chairman Beagle and members of the Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee. My name is Fred Petersen, I am the Emergency Management Agency Director for Ottawa County. I would like to take this opportunity to impress upon you the importance of the continued operation of the state's nuclear power plants.

There's no doubt that Ohio's nuclear power plants are a significant source of reliable, secure and clean electricity for the state. The Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station in Ottawa County and the Perry Nuclear Power Plant in Lake County generate electricity regardless of weather conditions or the availability of natural gas and coal. These plants also benefit Ohio's air quality as nuclear power produces no carbon emissions.

Davis-Besse and Perry contribute to a diverse energy portfolio, reducing the state's dependence upon any one fuel source. Without these plants the electricity grid in our region is more vulnerable to potential shortfalls in the availability of natural gas. During the polar vortex in 2014, I experienced first-hand just how vulnerable the grid is to this demand for natural gas. I was contacted by FirstEnergy just as we entered one of the coldest periods of the polar vortex. They needed to inform me, as the County Emergency Management Agency Director, of the potential that PJM, the grid manager, may have to implement rolling brown-outs in our area due to the instability of the grid. This was due to the residential demand for natural gas which significantly reduced the availability of natural gas for electricity generation. Fortunately, we were able to avoid the rolling brown-outs, but as an emergency manager, that is a call I do not ever want to be faced with receiving again.

In addition to their contribution to a stable and reliable grid, there is a significant role these power plants play in keeping our communities safe as well. Davis-Besse and Perry help maintain public safety and preparedness by providing critical funding that supports

emergency response agencies in the counties surrounding the plants and at the state level. Seven counties around these two plants – including Ottawa, Lucas, Erie, Sandusky, Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula – receive, in total, more than \$900,000 in annual grants that pay salaries for our emergency response personnel, allow us to purchase and maintain equipment and facilities, and assist in the training of our personnel.

State of Ohio agencies benefit similarly – collectively, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency receives approximately \$2.75 million each year from Davis-Besse and Perry to support emergency preparedness. While some of the funds are used specifically to prepare us for the highly unlikely possibility of a radiological emergency in the state, they also help us to ensure emergency responders are ready to address a wide variety of events, even those that are unrelated to plant operation. For example, some of this funding is used to maintain the Ottawa County public safety radio system used by fire and emergency medical services, law enforcement, the County siren system, and school buses. This radio system is used daily in the protection and care of our residents, students and visitors

In addition to, and perhaps of more importance than the funding provided, the counties involved in radiological emergency planning and preparedness have robust plans and procedures that are exercised and evaluated regularly. Our communities benefit from a well-rounded emergency services force that is always ready to support public health and safety, and Ohio's nuclear plants play a large role in making that possible. As an example of this, in June of 2010 when an EF4 tornado was moving through Lake Township in Wood County and on its way toward Ottawa County, we were able to sound our warning sirens in Ottawa County twice prior to its arrival, warning our residents of imminent danger. This saved multiple lives. This siren system only exists in Ottawa County because of the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station.

In summary, I challenge you to find a better, or more proven corporate partner of Emergency Management in the State of Ohio, than the nuclear power industry.

As of today, the long-term viability of these plants is at risk and therefore so is the State of Ohio's balanced energy portfolio. Our state is rapidly moving toward a very narrow energy portfolio, one that I believe puts our citizens' safety at risk.

Just as we require safety for so many products we use every day, why shouldn't we require the added safety of a diverse electricity market?

Your job here is a difficult one, but I call on you to find a way to ensure the continued operation of Ohio's nuclear power plants.

Thank you.