

Testimony: House Bill 6: "Creates Ohio Clean Air Program"  
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I have driven from Akron today to express my opinion on House Bill 6 because I am passionate about doing everything we can do to minimize the catastrophe of global warming.

With the horrific threat of global warming bearing down on us, everything we do should be aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Any bill labeled "Creates Ohio Clean Air Program" should do just that. This bill does not do what its name suggests. Not even close.

Yes, keeping nuclear plants open will help reduce the rate at which we are burning coal, releasing carbon into our atmosphere, warming the climate, acidifying our water, and damaging our health. For that crucial reason, and for that reason only, keeping nuclear power plants in operation, at least temporarily, is, in my opinion, a good idea.

But the point of the bill is clearly not to clean our air and reduce our carbon emissions, because the rest of the bill betrays that purpose.

Undermining our Ohio clean energy and energy efficiency standards does not help reduce carbon emissions or clean our air.

Eliminating supports for our solar power industry does not help.

And worst of all, transferring some of those supports to coal decidedly does not help.

The purpose of this bill has become obscured by a complicated morass of tangential concerns about

- government's role in the market
- job creation
- costs to consumers
- the moral hazard of supporting companies that behave badly
- concerns about whether Ohio is an energy exporting or importing state

These issues all are important and deserve attention, but they should be dealt with in other legislation intended to address them directly.

If we are concerned about jobs, if we want Ohio to be a generator and exporter of clean energy, remove the oppressive setbacks on wind turbines and allow that industry to generate energy and create jobs.

If we are concerned about low-income families struggling to pay their energy bills, then address the issue of low-wage jobs, tax rates for low-income families, and other forms of relief.

If we are concerned about the bad behavior of First Energy, and I certainly am, we should make sure that the company is closely monitored for operational safety and financial malfeasance.

As for government intervention in the market: When market forces do not include considerations for sustainability, the general health and wellbeing of the general populace, or the voices of future generations, that is where government has a legitimate role, and indeed an obligation to act.

But, the complications in this bill cloud the main issue. To clarify the value of House Bill 6 we should ask this primary question: Does this bill reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our risk of catastrophic climate change, and protect our health from filthy air and water?

The answer is, "No." As currently written, it does not.

Please keep our nuclear energy plants in operation until such time as we can generate sufficient clean energy without them.

And please remove all measures from this legislation that interfere with the absolutely essential purpose of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

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