

**Testimony of Mark Rantala, Executive Director
Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority
Submitted to
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Ohio House of Representatives**

Chairman Vitale, Vice Chairman Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am thankful for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of House Bill 6. My name is Mark Rantala, and I am the Executive Director of the Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority. As you have heard today from the many people who have testified before me, House Bill 6, which calls for the creation of the Ohio Clean Air Program, will lower monthly utility bills, promote clean energy, maintain Ohio's economic vitality, and protect jobs. Simply put, HB 6 is the right approach to modernize Ohio's energy policies.

Without HB 6, Ohio's two nuclear generating power plants will be forced to close. Allowing our state's nuclear power plants to close, an action that cannot be reversed, has statewide implications. Ohio's nuclear power plants contribute over \$500 million to the state's GDP annually; these nuclear plants pay \$30 million in state and local taxes each year; and these nuclear plants pay \$45 million each year to vendors across the state. This a substantial amount of money that would no longer flow into our economy. If our state's nuclear plants are forced to close prematurely, citizens across the state will ultimately be tasked with making up the economic shortfall through higher utility bills and potential tax increases. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that a recent poll suggests that 75 percent of Ohio residents support taking action to keep the plants open.

To underscore the impact on the local community, we can look to the closure of Vermont Yankee nuclear plant in Vernon, Vermont. When the plant closed its doors, the local community had to cut their annual budget in half. High-skilled, well-paying jobs left the area and homes were put for sale at significantly reduced prices. Towns where nuclear plants leave are crippled by gaping holes in budgets, depressed home values, and public officials are forced to adopt tax increases to make up for millions of dollars in lost revenue.

A recent study estimates that the closure of the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants would increase the typical Ohio residential customer's electric bill by an average of \$35 dollars annually between 2022 and 2029, with bills rising as much as \$68 annually by 2029. The real world ramifications of not passing HB 6 are staggering.

The clock is ticking for the Ohio state legislature to take action to ensure our local communities can continue to prosper. Allowing our nuclear power plants to close prematurely would slash significant revenue streams for our local communities and bring economic growth to a grinding halt for many in the state of Ohio.