

Testimony of Rebecca Clutter

House Energy Committee May 22, 2019

Chairman Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and Committee members,

I'm here to give you an everyday citizen perspective. My income, unlike many who have already testified, is not dependent on swaying your opinion on this matter one way or the other.

My name is Rebecca Clutter. I want reliability and consistency in my electric supply. I want the lights to come on when I flip a switch, I want the heat to work in the winter, I want my outlets to create power on demand, and I want those things at the best price point. HB6 will reduce rates by eliminating the federal mandate. Even with the add-on by the state, the rates are still lower.

I live in a rural section of Medina County that is a mix of mostly residential and agricultural parcels. Approximately 75% of the township I reside in is covered by the Lorain Medina Rural Electric (LMRE) Co-op, while the remaining 25% is covered by First Energy. Residents in my surrounding area are all very much aware that those on the First Energy side of our township pay much higher electric rates than those of us on the co-op side. LMRE told me that a good part of the reason that the co-op rates are less expensive is primarily due to the fact that the Co-ops chose to opt out of the federal mandates.

A few more brief demographics:

- Most of the folks in my area use propane or natural gas to heat their homes. It provides a warmer heat than electric.
- Water heaters are a mix, but most view electric as more expensive.
- Nearly everyone I speak with regularly hates the light bulbs that were mandated on them. The color is fake and changes between bulb manufacturers. They don't last as long as is claimed, and they are way too expensive.
- I live in a township with 3 acre minimum lot sizes with no industrial or commercial base, where Amish buggies regularly drive down my road, and still I am subjected to ECheck emissions testing on my vehicle. This is completely laughable and should be scaled back.
- And full disclosure, the township where my home is located has a rich history of oil production and my other properties are in SE Ohio in the shale play.

I am an equal opportunity complainer, so buckle up.

You all do not make it easy for the average person to search a matter out. I hear you talk about how this is "The People's House", and I commend you for that shift in narrative, but at least on this particular HB you need to know that I tried to have discussions on this bill with several of you in this room while the subcommittee hearings were in progress in order to better understand the issues, and could not get past the folks that answer your phones. I realize that I do not live in all of your districts, but on a particular committee, you really do represent all of us in Ohio. I did finally get a call back from my own Rep the day before the last hearing after the deadline had passed to submit testimony. So forgive me

that my conversation with that Rep is not included in this testimony. So, with the no-call backs and the one late call, please tell me exactly how this is The People's House? One office staffer was gracious enough to tell me that she didn't understand a lot about this, but would send me some info. What I received was a 200 plus page MIT document on nuclear energy. Well, that was a less than fun read that still did not afford me the option of discussion with a Representative even after reading that document. Since I was not able to have this discussion with several of you prior to submitting testimony for this hearing, the body of my testimony contains three (3) asks and are based off of what I have observed during this process as well as picked up doing my own data collection.

Let me start by thanking the Speaker and the committees for having the Ohio Channel air the hearings. Prior presented testimony gave me a road map on where to look for answers regarding several questions I had. I would also like to thank the bill sponsors for bringing this up, because if people only watched the main stream media, they would never see the magnitude of the problem you all are trying to fix.

I learned a lot from watching some of the hearings. I learned that both sides use discussion unrelated to the bill to push their agendas. I heard a lot of testimony unsupported by facts. I heard corporate entities defending and refuting positions based on their corporate positions and geographical locations. I heard schools and local elected officials differ on opinions based on where their tax base comes from with almost zero sense of really understanding the underlying issue at hand or how it impacts other areas of the state.

What I did NOT hear was information on the use of Molten Salt reactors and the many benefits those could offer our region. I did not hear that the use of the newer nuclear can actually use up the spent Uranium over time so that waste no longer needs buried under a mountain somewhere, or that in time a conversion to Thorium could be made which would be more cost effective and safer. I did NOT hear how those Molten Salt reactors could decrease the coolant requirement of existing nuclear. I did not hear about how nuclear technology has the potential to develop medical isotopes for cures to disease. My God, why would we not want to cure diseases?

Painfully obvious omissions were how Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments from the federal lands in the southern portion of our state impact the finances of those corporations and private citizens within the boundaries of the Wayne National Forest (WNF). Those PILT payments never get brought up. Even on the transportation bill, those PILT payments were never brought up. Those impacted counties face a whole different level of hardship than ever gets brought up in populated area talks. Also painfully absent was any testimony from the Ohio Oil and Gas Association (OOGA). OOGA's absence I assume are related to the fact that they have a combined membership of oil as well as natural gas. That is important to note, as my research indicates that the molten salt reactors could actually benefit the oil industry here in Ohio in a way not unlike how natural gas benefits from supporting wind and solar.

Admittedly, I have not watched all of the testimonies that were presented, but perhaps the most striking of all of those that I viewed, was part two of the last committee meeting when Timken Steel was brought back before the committee for further questioning. My thought on that discussion was that if the average voter had heard that testimony, they would be as outraged as I was. The list of expletives I uttered while watching it was long. As much as I would like to, I will not repeat them here.

I would have liked to have discussed this with some of you in advance, but since that did not happen, here I am and here's my take after watching hours of testimony and researching as much as I could on my own.

In a nutshell, what we have from my perspective are several energy generation producers from various sources all out peacocking and marking their territories, each of them proudly proclaiming that they have measured and indeed have the biggest stick. Then there are Federal mandates on everything from refrigerators, light bulbs, wind and solar that are funded through end user dollars by up-charging electric rates and charging higher costs on energy items purchased by residential consumers. We normal everyday people pay more for our energy needs and products that consume energy because non-base generation alternative energy sources are not profitable on their own and certain energy products increase revenues for private corporations on energy rebate offerings.

This does a really good job at taking money away from the people and padding corporate profits on many levels. On top of that, economic development swoops in and swings big energy deals with large corporations in the form of economic development riders under some screwed up reasonable arrangement statute that allows for some corporate entities to profit by reduced rate structures that are paid for by, guess who? ... Me and every other private citizen simply because we are electric consumers in our own private residences.

In my opinion, this whole mess, (the federal mandates combined with economic development utility kickbacks and rebates), is a sad sick trick on the people of Ohio that resembles nothing less than using a public utility for what I would call Money Laundering 101. We residential customers get to pay for everything twice it seems, and then if that weren't enough we also get to pay for "special" company's electric bills. At the very least, I am glad that this was publically exposed. Perhaps there really is a method to the madness.

My first ask would be that some provision be placed as an amendment to this bill that prevent private corporations from passing their energy costs onto residential consumers. Corporate end users should pay for their own energy costs just like I do. I should not have to pay for more than I use.

HB 6 is a good first step in reducing some of the costs passed onto residential consumers by eliminating the federal mandate and replacing it with a cheaper, goal oriented attempt at doing something that actually benefits Ohio.

Although I am supportive of this bill, First Energy is not off the hook from me either. Let's go back in time a few years for a little history lesson for the benefit of those of you who are new. This company badly mismanaged funds. They paid huge sums in campaign contributions, overspent on corporate events, and appeared to be more concerned about their unsecured financial investors rather than the people they were charged with serving. For as vital a function as this company serves, its management in my opinion acted badly.

My second ask would be to somehow make sure that whoever owns and operates the nuclear power plants when First Energy comes out of bankruptcy, that they be held financially accountable to the residents of Ohio. To this average voter, it looks like corporate parties, government lobbyists, and campaign contributions cost everyone mightily. If they were able to afford those things as a public utility, then their rate structures were too high to begin with. It is offensive to me to think that people I

know paid monthly payments to a public utility which then paid for campaign contributions that energy end-users had no control over or say in the matter.

This HB 6 is quite different than the last go around, which is likely the reason many of you switched your positioning on this. All by itself, that has been an interesting observation.

In my opinion, Nuclear as an industry in Ohio really does appear to have taken a hit on the wind and solar mandates. They are hamstrung by the mandates which puts them in the awkward position of being unable to develop and produce new nuclear technologies. I believe that with the added financial monitoring, the every 3 years reassessment, and giving nuclear the room to innovate, that great things can happen for Ohio.

I agree that the need for grid diversity among baseload providers is absolutely necessary. Grid diversity is not only important related to unforeseen shutdowns, but also from a national security interest as well. We need the overlap, it's just that simple. As a homeowner, even I have a backup energy source for when an electric line is disrupted in my coverage area. This is just common sense.

The arguments between the Energy providers, in my opinion, are nothing more than turf wars that ignore the people they are meant to service. It's childish and self-serving, especially when considering that this bill gives them all an equal metric on which they can be rewarded.

One often overlooked plus for nuclear is that of all the energy generators in Ohio, including alternative energy sources, nuclear is the only one that does not require the need to disrupt more surface acreage of pasture, farm, and timber lands. This saves and preserves the very things that actually gobble up carbon naturally. I'm surprised the environmentalists that testified didn't bring this up.

HB 6 gives end users a security net in the form of grid diversity, creates the potential to produce medical cures in the form of much needed medical isotopes, levels the playing field for ALL energy generators, and takes at least some of the financial responsibility off the backs of every day citizens. It could lead to the elimination of those ridiculous emissions testing stations at least in places where no industrial activity is occurring. It rewards energy generators for locating in Ohio and prevents the handouts from extending across state lines. It would keep jobs and technical expertise here in Ohio, all while encouraging innovation, technological advances, and producing cleaner air.

Ohio could really be on the cutting edge of a whole lot of exciting things if you let it.

My final ask, is that this body support HB 6. It has an automatic 3 year reassessment. If it doesn't work, no harm no foul. If it works, you all look like heroes to your voters! What have you got to lose by trying. This is a change in business as usual, but recognize that big problems are never solved by looking at things in the same way that created the problem in the first place.

I thank you for your time.