



Ohio Sierra Club Nuclear Free Committee  
503 South Front Street, Suite 210  
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12-14-20

## Ohio House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight Testimony in opposition to Ohio House Bill 798

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Abrams, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Select Committee on Energy Policy and Oversight.

My name is Patricia Marida and I chair the Ohio Sierra Club Nuclear Free Committee. We speak in opposition to Ohio House Bill 798.

**House Bill 798 is not a repeal of House Bill 6.** Just the opposite, HB 798 essentially reaffirms the major features of House Bill 6, while delaying payment to Energy Harbor for one year.

**Repealing House Bill 6 should be about crime, not about nuclear power.** When making the 5 arrests, the U.S. Attorney labeled this *“The largest bribery and money laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio.”* Instead of discussing the massive criminality and bribery behind House Bill 6, the legislature has deflected the issue back to the so-called “merits” of nuclear power.

**The legislature needs to formulate a overall energy policy.** “All of the above” is not an energy policy. It is doing nothing. Instead of developing legislation designed with the input of powerful corporations, and then asking the public to testify yea or nay, the legislature needs to reverse that process. **Hold public hearings on what an energy policy should look like.** Ohio needs energy, but not at the expense of our clean air and water. You have all heard talk about sustainability. Too often, the end-game of the sustainability argument is not discussed. That end game is the brick wall that will be hit if unsustainable practices are continued. Accusations that we will be left in the dark should be directed at those criticizing sustainable practices, not those advocating for them. No one in their right mind would advocate for instantly closing down all fossil fuel and nuclear power generation. Ohio needs to move as quickly as possible from these unsustainable energy sources to renewable energy and efficiency. Renewables are cheaper. Efficiency is the cheapest. Renewables and efficiency create more jobs, distribute those jobs more widely, and generate jobs that are cleaner and far less dangerous than those in the fossil fuel and nuclear power industries.

**Nuclear power has never been able to support itself.** From the Price Anderson Act, which limits liability of corporations for a nuclear accident and instead puts the costs onto the public; to public funding of nuclear research and development; to lowering safety standards so that the technology will be affordable; to the inevitable cost to the public generations from now as the waste still has to be kept isolated from the biosphere and the corporations have long since folded – the nuclear industry sucks in public money and bleeds radioactivity. What the Union of Concerned Scientists say in their 2011 report, [Nuclear Power: Still Not Viable without Subsidies](#) is proven even more accurate with legislation such as House Bill 6.

**Nuclear Power: expensive, carbon intensive and radioactive:** Earlier we noted that a repeal of House Bill 6 is about corruption, not about the merits of nuclear power. Nonetheless, the legislature’s lack of action to repeal House Bill 6 subjects Ohioans, and anyone drinking the waters of Lake Erie, to the continuation of the ravages of nuclear power.

The Sierra Club is opposed to nuclear power in all its forms, because of its expense and dangers. Far from being “low carbon” or ludicrously called “emissions-free,” nuclear power has been rated as having a slightly lower carbon footprint than natural gas. However, this calculation does not include the energy that will be needed to keep radioactive nuclear waste isolated for the next several thousand years. See the Sierra Club fact sheet [How Nuclear Power Worsens Climate Change](#). Nuclear power not only releases lots of carbon, it is inappropriate in a warming climate as reactors are threatened by floods, hurricanes and weakened upstream dams. Reactors are being forced to close when the water they use for cooling becomes too warm—which is happening all too often now, and just as electricity is at its highest demand.

Nuclear technology costs money and spreads radioactivity throughout all of its 3 phases—Front End, reactors, and Back End. The Front End is how nuclear power gets its fuel— from uranium mining, milling and enrichment to the fabrication of fuel, to the building of facilities and the transportation between all these. The reactors themselves use a tremendous amount of carbon energy in their construction, and pose a threat of more catastrophes like Chernobyl and Fukushima. The Back End is the radioactive waste that continues to accumulate as reactors operate. Science has no answer as to what to do with this waste. Not to mention the fact that all along this chain, radioactivity is released into the environment.

In closing, I will refer you to our committee’s flier [FirstEnergy: A Bankrupt Company Cutting Corners on Nuclear Maintenance](#). This flier documents 28 reactor maintenance waivers and deferrals on inspections, standards, maintenance, repairs, upgrades and other regulations given to FirstEnergy/now Energy Harbor by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission since 2017. These exemptions include extending containment leakage rate test intervals, deferral of inspections, suspension of security measures in an emergency or during severe weather, exemption from record retention requirements, deferral of actions related to flooding and fires, exemption from the definition of physical barrier to include barbed wire, and allowing Davis-Besse to increase liquid effluents tenfold. In 2020, more maintenance exemptions have been given to nuclear plants due to the coronavirus, plus the NRC is now allowing reactors to run with fewer staff working much longer shifts. You can read more about this in our April 2020 article, [Coronavirus Hits the Nukes, Keep Your Fingers Crossed](#). Not only that, but the Environmental Protection Agency has also [suspended enforcement of environmental laws](#) amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Marida, chair  
Ohio Sierra Club Nuclear Free Committee