

House Select Committee on Energy Policy & Oversight
Chairman Jim Hoops
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 798
Testimony of Dr. Cynthia McPherson Frantz
December 14, 2020

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 798. My name is Dr. Cynthia McPherson Frantz. I am the founder, and serve on the board of, *Providing Oberlin With Efficiency Responsibly (POWER)*, a non-profit organization in Oberlin OH, devoted to helping residential customers make their homes as energy efficient as possible.

I urge this committee to reject HB 798, and instead fully repeal HB 6. You can easily do this by supporting House Bill 738, House Bill 746 and Senate Bill 346. Even before it became clear that HB6 came into being through the largest bribery scandal in Ohio history, this bill clearly put the interests of the coal and nuclear industry above the well-being of regular Ohio citizens.

Funneling money away from renewable energy and into coal and nuclear moves the State of Ohio in the exact WRONG direction to prepare its citizens to take advantage of the booming renewable industry that is already eclipsing coal. In a report released by Lazard in October of this year, they computed the comparative levelized cost of energy (LCOE). Without even taking into account subsidies, or a carbon tax, utility-scale solar and wind had the lowest LCOE of all sources considered (including coal and nuclear). In addition to addressing climate change and the health impacts of air pollution, renewables are the economic future. I understand that the bailouts that HB6 delivers are in the best interest of the coal and nuclear industries, but they are NOT in the best interest of Ohio ratepayers. Who do you serve?

I am most perplexed by the removal of the mandate for energy efficiency programs in HB6 – something that HB 798 does nothing to correct. **Using resources as efficiently as possible should be a core conservative value – something people of all political persuasions can get behind.** While the members of this committee may not worry about affording their utility bills, many Ohio residents are facing utility shut-offs as winter begins. Income losses from COVID-19 make this situation even more perilous than ever. Low income families spend a disproportionate amount of their monthly income on utility bills; if rates go up, it could mean they have to choose between putting food on the table or keeping the furnace running. As winter approaches, utility shut-offs become a serious health risk, particularly for families with children, elderly, or disabled members.

If someone can't afford to pay their utility bill, they certainly can't afford to have their house weatherized. Utility-funded energy efficiency programs have helped people all across Ohio make their homes healthy, affordable and comfortable. When we invest in energy efficiency, we permanently lower the energy costs of homeowners, giving them an economic cushion that can help them remain self-sufficient. Many of POWER's clients have said that they were in danger

of losing their home, but because they qualified for a utility-funded energy efficiency program, they were given a chance to make it financially.

Energy efficiency programs have other benefits: they create jobs for those that conduct inspections, insulate, and weatherize; they make our air cleaner; and they help fight climate change. Energy efficiency programs bring more benefits to more people than bail-outs for dying industries. Once again, I urge this committee to reject HB 798, and instead fully repeal HB 6.