

*House Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation  
Chair Dick Stein and Chair Michael O'Brien  
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 6  
Testimony of S. Mercy Hamerly  
Opponent  
April 23, 2019*

Chair Stein, Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation, my name is Mercy Hamerly. I am a First Energy customer, lifelong Ohio resident, and opponent of Ohio House Bill 6. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent to Ohio House Bill 6.

It is fact that the majority of adults both favor clean energy and disapprove of outdated, unsafe methods. According to a study from PEW Research conducted three years ago, 89% of U.S. adults favor expanding solar panel farms, 83% favor expanding wind turbine farms<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, 54% of adults in the U.S. oppose expanding nuclear energy, and 57% oppose expanding coal mining. Even across party lines, 83% and 75% of the most conservative Republicans are in favor of expanding wind and solar, respectively. This is not a partisan issue, it is a human rights issue. The majority of U.S. adults are in favor of expanding both wind and solar while moving away from nuclear and coal.

So, then, why is it that we are even discussing a bill with 0 currently eligible solar farms<sup>2</sup> and more than half of the money (about \$169 mil) up for grabs for First Energy's nuclear plants<sup>3</sup>? Even if we are going to completely ignore the necessity of these renewables in order to continue to survive on this planet, Ohio House Bill 6 is not what Americans want. Representing your constituents means supporting their interests and safety. Nuclear energy is not safe, clean, or renewable energy, unless you find the idea of your children and grandchildren playing in radioactive waste an acceptable standard of living.

Additionally, making the current renewable energy charge opt-in by mail is a very insidious way to fund this program. Taking money away from wind and solar in order to fund mostly nuclear and potentially even some coal is a huge leap backward. Taking money away from coal to fund nuclear may have been a step in the right direction 40 years ago, but even that today would not nearly be enough, and certainly taking money away from the energy all types of Americans can actually agree on is not a step in the right direction.

Opting-in via mail is a huge hassle. Snail mail is not as typically used by youth, who are the most likely to want more clean energy. 75% of U.S. adults between ages 18 and 29 favor expanding wind and solar instead of oil and coal, as

compared to only 50% of U.S. adults over 65<sup>4</sup>. Although most Americans favor clean energy, the young feel the most strongly about it. Requiring people to go out of their way to buy stamps and envelopes to opt-in, if they're even aware that it is possible to opt-in, is a barrier that will have significant impact on our clean energy programs. Personally, many of my young friends do not have cars, nor stamps around the house. This is also assuming that people of various classes, some on tight budgets, can afford all three additional charges (both opt-in clean energy charges, plus the charge proposed in this bill).

Taking money from all Ohioans, when half of it will go to fund just First Energy nuclear, is not fair to the majority who are not First Energy customers, and will see no benefits. They will receive no financial gains, and no investments in energy that will actually power Ohio for a lifetime.

I implore you to consider the future, and the fate of the world as a whole. This program would likely raise energy bills due to the costliness of nuclear energy. They are not going to incentivise a large enough change that will actually keep sustaining our endangered planet. There is no financial, economic, environmental, or logical reason to support this misleading and false program. If you do truly support clean energy, a better world, or a better Ohio, you will oppose Ohio House Bill 6 and support a drastic and rapid shift to wind and solar energy. There are losses to be cut here. It is up to you whether those losses will be decades-old unsafe power plants, or the health, safety, and joy of Ohioans.

## Sources

1

<https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2016/10/04/public-opinion-on-renewables-and-other-energy-sources/>

2

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3

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