

Cathy Bergman , Ohio Education Association President Representative

Benton-Carroll-Salem Local School District

Ohio House Committee on Energy & Natural Resources Subcommittee on Generation

Chairman Stein, Chairman O'Brien and members of the Subcommittee on Generation, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of House Bill 6, the Ohio Clean Air Program. My name is Cathy Bergman, and I am the Ohio Education Association President Representative for the Benton-Carroll-Salem Local School District. I am today here on behalf of teachers, faculty members, and education professionals working in Ohio's schools, colleges, and universities to improve public education statewide. Our members provide a wide range of education services. As an organization, our mission is to strengthen public education while advocating for our members and the students we serve.

Passage of the Ohio Clean Air Program will go a long way in allowing us to further that mission by ensuring that local schools continue to benefit from the tax revenue provided by Ohio's clean energy industry. That's because not only will HB 6 lower monthly utility bills for Ohioans, protect local jobs and maintain Ohio's energy diversity—it will also help ensure the state's largest source of zero-emissions electricity, nuclear power, remains a part of Ohio's energy mix.

Ohio's two nuclear facilities—the Davis-Besse nuclear station outside Toledo and the Cleveland-area Perry nuclear plant—make vital contributions to local schools and communities across the state. Altogether, these two facilities are responsible for contributing a combined 30.7 million in state and local tax revenues annually. This tax revenue helps support public schools like those in Oak Harbor. Without such support, we would be forced to make devastating cuts or else raise taxes to make up for the lost revenue.

Allowing these plants to close prematurely would deplete a significant source of revenue for Benton-Carroll-Salem Local School District and others in the state. This is particularly damaging when so many of our schools localities are already struggling with budget shortfalls and funding gaps. If anything, we should be doing more as a state to help address these financial concerns, not exacerbate the situation further by undermining funding provided by our state's clean energy facilities through tax revenues.

On top of that, the energy that would be generated to make up for the lost nuclear power—which accounts for 14 percent of Ohio's electricity—would be less likely to come from a clean-burning energy source. Currently, nuclear power accounts for 90 percent of the state's carbon-free electricity. Jeopardizing these clean-energy contributions and relying more heavily on traditional, fossil-fuel-derived sources of energy is the wrong direction for Ohio if we want to be serious about limiting air pollution and reducing our carbon footprint.

That's another reason to support HB 6; it would create a new fund and program under the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority. The program would certify both Clean Air and Reduced Emissions resources, helping to incentivize cleaner energy generation and paying nearly \$300 million towards clean and reduced emissions resources annually. That's good news for our state's clean energy and carbon reduction efforts, and will help keep Ohio cleaner and a better place to live for future generations.

Please support the Ohio Clean Air Program and help ensure our state invests in clean energy so that our schools, our communities, and our entire state may continue to benefit from the economic, employment and environmental benefits they provide. Advancing H.B. 6 will help ensure stronger communities and schools across the state. Thank you for your time and consideration.