

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 Kaya Sittinger

April 23, 2019

Chair Stein, Chair O'Brien, and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy Generation, my name is Kaya Sittinger. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent of Ohio House Bill 6.

My opposition, to be sure, lies not with the bill's alleged desire to promote clean air, but rather with the proposed mechanism of obtaining that clean air. This de facto bailout for First Energy's least efficient nuclear plants is bad for all Ohioans, especially young Ohioans like myself. I was born and raised in Cleveland. My family, along with millions of other Ohioans, have paid time and time again for First Energy's mistakes - over the past twenty years, we've seen 11 billion of our dollars as a state sunk into correcting First Energy's mistakes. That's 11 billion dollars which could easily have gone towards investing in energy sources which would create safe, well-paying, stable *renewable* energy jobs for existing workers, as well as for young folks like myself seeking to invest in and work within their home state. These nuclear plants pose serious threats to the integrity of our local economies, our environment, and to our public health. Bailing out these nuclear plants, or, more specifically, providing a framework through which these plants may absolve themselves of their mismanagement, serves not to aid in the production of power for our state, but rather as a means of perpetuating corporate greed at the expense of the security of our state's built and natural environment.

On the point of our economy and our grid, this bill hurts all of us. The notion that the closing of the Davis Besse and Perry plants would result in any considerable deficit in our grid's ability to power our state is false - PJM says we can withstand a loss of 30 Thousand MegaWatt Hours, and the closing of these plants would result in a loss of under 18 thousand, well below that 30 thousand megawatt hour baseline. But as a young professional and consumer, though the issue of how much energy is available to us is important to me, I'm also concerned with how we go about obtaining that energy. First Energy's pattern of devaluing its properties has adverse effects on surrounding communities. This harms not only the pre-existing communities near First Energy's nuclear plants, but also the economic futures of these areas. When schools and job opportunities suffer as a result, you lose the potential for growth and stability. That is to say that First Energy, in keeping these plants open, aims to profit off of the instability created by keeping inefficient plants open. This de-incentivizes young Ohioans like myself from investing in local economies. This clean air fund isn't going to create any meaningfully innovative or sustainable energy practices which will create jobs, ensure economic growth and stability, or protect our environment.

This brings me to the most important point in all of this - the effect that these plants have on our environment. We must account for the waste created by nuclear plants, as well as the threats posed by a nuclear meltdown. We aren't in safe hands here. Football-sized holes in reactor lids, groundwater leaks, and a lack of oversight and transparency from leadership at these plants prove that keeping these nuclear plants open will pose a threat to our public health and to the environment. Passing house bill 6 would set a dangerous precedent for other states who may look to us as a leader in energy production. I urge you to prioritize investing in our renewable energy standards in Ohio. I have so much life left to live in this state, as will future generations of Ohioans. Our children deserve to exist in a world free from the fear of a nuclear disaster, and in a world which has prioritized safe, clean, and sustainable practices of obtaining energy that don't pose a threat to our great lakes or Ohio's natural environment. If clean air is our objective, we would do well to divest from nuclear, coal, oil, and natural gas and move towards safer, greener, more effective sources of energy.