

Testimony of: Hal Hawk, President & CEO, Crown Battery
Submitted to: The Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
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My name is Hal Hawk, and I am the President and CEO of Crown Battery, headquartered in Fremont, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of House Bill 6, which creates the Ohio Clean Air Program. I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this important legislation that will save Ohio's nuclear power plants and protect the surrounding communities.

My company, Crown Battery, opened its doors as a small battery repair shop in Fremont, Ohio in 1926. We are proud of the fact that we now provide batteries for heavy-duty equipment for on- and off-road use all over the world. To this day, we have a single location in Fremont where we engineer and manufacture equipment for a global market. Our presence in Fremont helps ensure incredible efficiencies and quality control, in part because of the workforce and economics of our region. Allowing Ohio's nuclear energy plants to retire prematurely threatens both.

The Davis Besse and Perry nuclear plants support over 4,300 jobs in Ohio, and the energy produced by these two plants accounts for roughly 90% of Ohio's carbon-free energy. Furthermore, these nuclear plants are a significant source of reliable and resilient energy. According to a study following the 2014 polar vortex, nuclear power was the least impacted energy source. It was found that natural gas accounted for 55% of outages, coal plants were linked to 26% of outages, and nuclear plants – only 3%.

If the Ohio Senate fails to pass HB 6, a bill that received bipartisan support in the House of Representatives, thereby causing Ohio's nuclear plants to shutter, Ohioans will face increased utility prices and decreased reliability. Businesses across Ohio, including Crown Battery, cannot succeed under these circumstances.

While I am concerned for the future of a company that has been in Ohio for nearly 100 years, as a lifelong resident of Sandusky County, I worry about the impact the closure of these nuclear plants will have on our region, and ultimately, our state. I see the impact that the closure of a nuclear plant in Vermont had on the local community, and I fear the same consequences await our state. When the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant was forced to close prematurely, Vernon, Vermont was forced to cut its annual budget in half. The high-skilled, highly compensated workers left; jobs vanished and homes went on the market – for far less than they had originally been purchased.

The trickle-down effect can be devastating. If we let Ohio's nuclear plants close, the jobs will disappear, the workers will leave, and the schools and families will soon follow.

I do not want to see Ohio's communities suffer the same fate as Vernon, Vermont. Ohio's nuclear plants drive the economy and anchor our communities. I urge this committee and all members of the Senate to please, help save these economic engines of our region by supporting HB 6.