I urge the committee to oppose HB 6 on many grounds, including that the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant, in particular, risks making living in the surrounding area dangerous indefinitely, as in Chernobyl or Fukushima. Already at the end of its design life, it has had two of the five worst nuclear incidents in the US since 1979. When boric acid ate over six inches into the reactor head in 2002, leaving only about 3/8 inch of steel cladding to contain the high pressure coolant, the containment building was breached in order to put on a used replacement reactor head. Other problems were found that could have interfered with or prevented proper reactor shutdown, which could have caused the very catastrophe we fear. Whether or not HB 6 is passed, the nuclear reactors need inspection, by someone other than First Energy Solutions. In 2006, the Department of Justice pursued prosecutions over the incident in 2002, charging employees with falsely claiming inspections were more adequate than they were.

HB 6 should be opposed on the basic grounds of good government and good policy. Consumers across the state are being asked to bail out corporations, and very well paid corporate executives, for poor management and inadequate profits, while HB 6 undermines the Renewable Portfolio Standard, relieves utilities from efficiency requirements, and does nothing to remove the obstacles to more renewable energy.

The Ohio legislature should not be favoring First Energy Solutions with bailouts.

The Ohio legislature should not be forcing consumers to subsidize two OLD coal plants, one of which is in Indiana.

The Ohio legislature should not be resisting the future by undermining energy efficiency and renewable energy development.

The Ohio legislature should not be pressured into decisions by the end of June; First Energy Solutions claiming it needs to order more fuel by then is putting on a false deadline for leverage. If the plants are not permanently closed, they can still be offline, as Davis-Besse was for two years to repair the damage discovered in 2002.

The nuclear power plants need to be decommissioned, and the best people to do that are the current workers. Because of the many issues around what to do with the radioactive waste, plans for decommissioning need to be made carefully, and not rushed. As part of decommissioning, there should be plans for the workers and community to transition, and training for the workers not needed in decommissioning. As for jobs, Ohio’s impeding of renewable energy is really inexplicable, as wind and solar jobs already far exceed jobs in coal and nuclear energy in the US, and wind and solar energy employment is one of the fastest growing fields.

Perhaps the best tipoff that HB 6 is a bad idea is that so much money, perhaps $3 million dollars just for tv ads, has been spent to contribute to legislators and mislead the public. If it is such a great idea, why do legislators need such incentive? If it passes, the appearance will be that the legislature has been bought, which further undermines public trust in the honesty of our institutions.

I urge you to oppose HB 6.