

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Rich Shank
June 19, 2019

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee: I am Rich Shank. I have a Ph.D. in environmental science and toxicology, and worked in the environmental sector my entire career, including four years as the Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and over five years at Scotts Miracle-Gro Company as the Senior Vice-President for Regulatory and Governmental Affairs and Chief Environmental Officer. I am now retired, but am active as a board member for several organizations, from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium to acting as the current Board President for the Ohio Environmental Council. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on House Bill 6.

I have been working on clean air and environmental issues for over forty years, and I am encouraged to see House Bill 6 acknowledge that Ohio must take action to ensure we have cleaner air. However, in contradiction to this acknowledgement, House Bill 6 would actually *increase* harmful air pollution and take Ohio backwards by gutting our renewable and energy efficiency standards. Ohio's standards have proven that they deliver cleaner air and health benefits to Ohioans, and reduce Ohioans' energy bills across the state. These standards have been working, and we must continue to improve upon them, not tear them down.

Let's be very clear about what House Bill 6 would do and what it would mean for Ohio's energy future. What we're talking about here is subsidizing aging nuclear plants at the expense of the progress we've made on renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts in Ohio. What we're talking about here is subsidizing aging nuclear plants while risking over 112,000 Ohio jobs in the clean energy sector. A true "Clean Air Program" would not attack our renewable and efficiency progress. When I was a young scientist at Ohio EPA, I toured Davis-Besse before the plant was operational and was able to climb up inside the cooling tower. At that time - in 1976 - nuclear was a big frontier, but that was over 40 years ago and technology has rapidly evolved since then. I'm not opposed to nuclear power, and I'm not advocating for these plants to shut down--they could very well be part of our energy future.

But I would never have imagined, thirteen years past the projected date the nuclear plant was to remain useful and functioning, asking you not to bail out this aging technology at the expense of Ohio's energy future--at the expense of renewables and efficiency programs that have helped move Ohio forward. We should not abandon the policies that are driving demand for renewables and efficiency, and therefore cleaner air; policies helping to guarantee Ohio makes progress toward a cleaner future. Ohio should not bail out nuclear plants at the expense of Ohio's

renewable portfolio standard and energy efficiency standard--Ohio needs all the low-carbon and pollution-free sources of generation available. Ohio needs to approach our energy landscape holistically, recognizing all components helping us move toward a cleaner future. House Bill 6 is not comprehensive, and fails to create a forward-thinking plan that will ensure Ohio becomes a leader in the energy field.

The clean energy industry has created good paying jobs for Ohioans, and jobs in solar and wind are among the nation's fastest growing jobs. With over 112,000 clean energy jobs in Ohio, growing at a rate of 4.6% between 2017-2018,¹ clean energy is our future and Ohio is well-positioned to be a leader. If we embrace our clean energy and energy efficiency standards instead of trying to gut them, we have a huge opportunity to expand on that progress. There are over 80,000 Ohioans employed in the energy efficiency sector alone--jobs that cannot be outsourced to other states. Jobs in lighting, sheet metal and ductwork, insulation or HVAC. These are good Ohio-based jobs, that we need to protect.

Other Midwest states, including our neighbors up north, have far more ambitious clean energy standards and policies, and are leaving Ohio behind.² Ohio can and should be a leader in this field, and we must prioritize policies that move us toward that bright future. Ohio's renewable and efficiency standards provide great benefits to Ohioans, and if anything should be strengthened, not gutted if we really want an "Ohio Clean Air Program". I urge you to have an honest conversation about how we achieve cleaner air in Ohio, and to ensure it includes all options, not just nuclear.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

¹ <https://www.cleanjobsmidwest.com/state/ohio>

² For example, see Michigan (15 percent by 2021 originally, and later increased to 35 percent by 2025) and Illinois (25 percent by 2025 - 2026).