

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of William Douglas Todd

June 19, 2019

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Doug Todd. I am a retiree who previously worked as a tax auditor, small business owner and Contracting official for a Department of Energy prime contractor. I have long advocated for public policies that will sustain our fragile environment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today as an opponent to Substitute House Bill 6.

As many others have noted, the presumption that nuclear energy has a low carbon footprint is flawed. When all the energy consumed in the production of nuclear fuel is included, mining, and especially processing, nuclear power has substantially higher carbon impact than is generally believed. Not as high as fossil fuels, but certainly higher than wind and solar. Furthermore, nuclear is prohibitively expensive.

Nuclear will be continued in Ohio by the recertification of plants that are now beyond their original estimated safe lifespan. No new nuclear operations are planned. Nuclear power is exceedingly dangerous and toxic. There is a reason that nuclear plants are certified for a limited time. High-level radiation is harsh on facilities and equipment. Going beyond the limits is hazardous. From Chernobyl and Fukushima we know that accidents have astronomical costs and permanent consequences. Such an accident in Ohio would be catastrophic. The waste nuclear generates is lethally toxic. The issues for the safe cost effective management and disposal of nuclear waste have never been solved.

As for the rest of the bill, the renewable energy provisions being diminished by this bill were having very positive outcomes. Ohio has considerable engineering and technical talent and great progress was being made in solar and wind energy. New expertise and jobs were coming online. This is the technology of the future and it attracts the bright vigorous minds that create a vital growing economy. The passage of HB 6 in its current form disparages this development, and the expertise and talent that the state developed with renewable energy will go to other places where it is wanted. Make no mistake, it is wanted other places.

All in all, HB 6, by subsidizing old dangerous technology while ditching new, promising technology is selling Ohio short. Like the phrase from the old movie, Ohio is taking a fall for the short term money of nuclear and fossil fuel industry cash. It will take away the better prospect of more promising renewable energy technology. In the future I can hear people say, too bad for Ohio, it could have been a contender.