

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Robert Rine, Owner/Operator Sugarwood Family Farms

June 17, 2019

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Robert Rine, Owner/Operator Sugarwood Family Farms, thank you for the opportunity to address you today as an opponent to Substitute House Bill 6.

I grew up on a farm with North Central Rural Electric. I moved to Columbus to attend The Ohio State University. I was conscious of money but didn't notice an electric bill being out of line while living in the city. My wife and I moved to Toledo to work and we couldn't believe our electric bill. We always read the statement that Toledo Edison, was collecting money that would help assure clean generation of electricity in the future. That was 1990, we then moved closer to the family farm to help with operations and took over one of the farmsteads that reluctantly was within Toledo Edison. It is now 2019. I have been paying twice the rate of the family farm which is 2 mile away for years. North central is only ½ mile from me yet I cannot switch because of some legal stipulation. My grain operation cannot be located near my house because of the ridiculous electrical rates.

I then hear that Public funds are going to be used to save a company that has been charging twice of another to "help" them come out of bankruptcy. I have been paying for this "clean energy" for many years. Where is the money that they have collected from me? Mismanagement of a company should not be funded by the public.

I hear nuclear energy is clean energy. I ask who did their homework? The spent fuel cannot be used as fertilizer; it cannot be consumed by organisms. It must be contained and stored away from people. Davis Besse came close in this century to destroying the lake and prime farmland by a "little leak" that corroded a hole in the reactor. Why would we support a bill that could allow something like that to happen again?

There is much discussion of coal and natural gas. Are these companies solvent? If so why do they need public funds? The laws of energy state that we cannot get more energy out of a reaction than we put in. The only way to make it "clean" is to scrub the CO₂, Sulfur compounds, CO and unburned hydrocarbons out of the emission gas. That will not be as profitable as it was in the past. Should they expect public funding for that? I help provide food, should I expect public funds to help me purchase cleaner burning machinery?

Wind and solar are the clean energy forms on this bill. No daily pollution with those and there may be some parts that aren't reusable when they are decommissioned, but this doesn't compare to Davis Besse, Perry, and the AEP coal plant. Why are these projects limited with their development by the wording of the few that are so eager to terminate these projects? Wind in Seneca and Huron counties has been talked about and researched for 15 years. I believe wind development will help the community and state with power and financial wellbeing. I am surmising that this bill is subjecting the project to non-science based emotions.

I have been asked why I do not put up a solar farm instead of supporting wind. I have been looked at with confused eyes when I say I cannot farm around the panels. So many people are making arguments when it comes down to the fact they don't want to look at them. We, the farmers, looked at a solution that was good for the land, good for the environment, was sustainable, and could provide revenue. Most farmers like myself feel this is a land owner right to use the property, their property, legally to their best interest. This bill has the appearance of a last ditch effort of a few to derail a project that has been underway for some time. I understand one person one vote, but I pay tax on every acre I farm. If I am being asked to fund the schools, county mental health, library, roads with my tax per acre, I have to ask that you please vote No on this bill. It undermines what we have set out to do by helping this great state in providing a truly renewable power for our next generation. Three generations working this farm were consulted before we began to support wind power. I am most certain that the four generations before that would have supported this forward thinking idea based on the farms existence.

I appreciate your time and consideration today, I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Robert O Rine