



## Repeal House Bill 6 testimony

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today about Ohio House Bill 6. My name is Cathy Cowan Becker, and for the last three years I have led the all-volunteer grassroots Ready for 100 campaign in Columbus and Ohio. Ready for 100 is a campaign of the Sierra Club to ask cities to commit to 100% renewable energy. So far 168 cities, 13 counties, 8 states, DC, and Puerto Rico have all made this commitment. More than 100 million people -- or 1 in 3 in the United States -- now live in a jurisdiction committed to 100% renewable energy. In Ohio that includes Cleveland, Cincinnati, Lakewood, and South Euclid.

During the time I have led the Ready for 100 campaign in Ohio, we have seen a seismic shift toward renewable energy through Ohio's Community Choice Aggregation program.

- In 2018, three-fourth of voters in Worthington approved electric aggregation for 100% renewable energy. Their residents and businesses saved almost \$100,000 in the first 10 months of the program.
- Cincinnati has long been aggregated for 100% renewable energy. Until recently the renewable component came from Renewable Energy Certificates. However, last year the city signed a contract to buy power from the largest municipal solar array in the nation, the Hecate solar project in Highland County.
- Columbus has put aggregation for 100% renewable energy on its ballot this year. If it passes, it will be the largest aggregation program in the Midwest and the third-largest in the country. The city's electricity will be supplied through construction of 700 MW of wind and solar energy here in Ohio, creating Ohio jobs and reducing the city's carbon emissions by 1.2 million metric tons.

How is this relevant to House Bill 6? What these cities are doing is charting our path to a healthy, prosperous future -- and I could not be more proud. What HB 6 did was anchor Ohio to a polluted and expensive past, financed on the backs of hardworking Ohio families through a \$61 million bribery scheme to purchase the Ohio Statehouse. Rarely does one find a real-life example of the stark contrast between good and evil, but this is such a case.

House Bill 6 must be repealed. It is simply not tolerable to allow a law to stand that was opposed by the vast majority of Ohioans and passed only through sheer brute force corruption. In my opinion, everyone responsible for the bribes from FirstEnergy and every politician of any party that took these bribes belongs in prison. What does it say about our state that even after this record-setting corruption was exposed for the world to see, the law it created is still on the books?

At the time HB 6 was under consideration, I was one of hundreds of Ohioans who testified against it. What I witnessed was nothing like I've ever seen in politics. It was clear from the outset that almost no one on the legislative committees considering the bill cared one whit what I or anyone else had to say. They were going to pass the bill regardless of its obvious corruption. None of the thousands of calls to

our elected officials made a bit of difference. Their minds – or rather their wallets – were made up. Democracy can't function like that – and we have no chance of addressing existential problems such as the climate crisis.

Our lives, our nation, and our planet depend on us doing the right thing. We can either move toward the fastest-growing jobs in the country in renewable energy, while cleaning our air and improving our health, or we can wallow in a polluted past while the planet's life support systems that support human civilization and all life on earth unravel before our eyes.

The choice could not be more apparent. Repeal HB 6 and embrace a clean energy future.

Thank you.