



17 S. High Street, #800 | Columbus, OH 43215  
1-866-389-5653 | Fax: 614-224-9801 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598  
aarp.org/oh | ohaarp@aarp.org | twitter: @AARPOhio  
facebook.com/AARPOH

**Written Proponent Testimony on House Bill 772  
Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee  
December 9, 2020  
Holly Holtzen, AARP Ohio**

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of AARP. As a nonpartisan, social mission organization representing individuals aged 50-plus with a national membership of 37 million and approximately 1.5 million members in Ohio, AARP is deeply concerned about the prospect of House Bill 6's ratepayer-funded bailout plan taking effect in January 2021. AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment. It is the negative impact of meritless utility rate increases on older Ohioans' financial security that brings us here today.

Signing this nuclear bailout bill into law was always bad for Ohio consumers, but the impact of COVID-19 has only made the choices many Ohioans have to make between paying for food, medicine, housing, and utilities even more dire. Even before COVID-19, utilities compromised a high proportion of older citizens' household budgets, and many Ohio citizens over 65 found it a challenge to pay their existing bills. Nor is it fair for Ohio's age 50-plus owners of small businesses to be forced to subsidize the ill-gotten gains of a publicly-traded corporation slated to turn a profit of \$515 million this year.<sup>1</sup> Any policy that raises utility bills, particularly during a pandemic, should take into consideration the impact on these very vulnerable Ohioans.

As outrageous as it was to ask Ohioans to bailout shareholders, House Bill 6 included other baffling provisions such as forcing Ohioans to finance a \$450 million subsidy to support a coal-powered plant in

---

<sup>1</sup> See G.A. 133, S.B. No. 346, Testimony of NRG Energy, Inc., delivered by Judith Lagano (Nov. 10, 2020) (FES/Energy Harbor in its May 2020, 2020-2022 Financial Outlook projecting \$515 million, \$585 million, and \$645 million for next three years).

Indiana and a \$68 million guaranteed profit mechanism, also called decoupling, for FirstEnergy. Not only does HB 772 repeal the anti-consumer surcharges to support Ohio's two nuclear power plants but it would also provide for refunds to Ohioans for bailout payments that they have already paid through their monthly utility bills that have supported the aforementioned coal plant subsidy and guaranteed profit mechanism for FirstEnergy. House Bill 772 is the best proposal to quickly help consumers and reverse the anti-consumer, pro-bailout policies enacted into law by the questionable passage of House Bill 6. As such, we also request your support in passing House Bill 772 with an emergency clause so that it may take effect immediately after receiving the governor's signature.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our testimony supporting House Bill 772. We favorably ask for immediate passage of the bill with the emergency clause to ensure that consumers do not begin paying for House Bill 6 bailout taxes in January 2021.