



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
HB 434 - Proponent Testimony
Sarah Spence, Executive Director
December 8, 2021

Chair Stephens, Vice-Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee: thank you for allowing me to submit written only proponent testimony for House Bill 434. My name is Sarah Spence, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF).

OHCEF was founded in 2015 to provide a forum for conservatives to discuss a diverse, all-of-the above energy portfolio – one that includes not only existing sources of traditional energy generation, but one that also seeks to expand the development of clean and renewable energy sources. OHCEF believes that clean energy and energy made clean through technology can strengthen both our economy and our national security while providing unmatched opportunities for Ohio-led innovation and job creation.

HB 434 would place Ohio at the forefront of helping private companies continue to develop advanced nuclear technologies and needed supply chain support here in the U.S. instead of turning to foreign countries. Nuclear power accounts for 19% of America's power production, and provides a carbon-free source of power. Despite its benefits, American nuclear power production has basically flat-lined over the last three decades. All 96 commercial nuclear reactors in the U.S. are light water reactors (LWR), which are variations on a technology first used in 1950.

Fortunately, new technologies in advanced nuclear are emerging. American engineers are developing a new generation of reactor designs that cost less and are more efficient than the LWRs of the 20th century. Some of the reactor technologies can even use waste as fuel, which helps address one of nuclear energy's largest drawbacks. Dozens of American companies are currently working on next generation nuclear. These entrepreneurs see the demand for clean, reliable electricity as a sizable market opportunity and most are supported by private capital. These new smaller reactors can power cities, rural towns or remote military installations and provide more reliability for the electric grid.



Though many new nuclear designs are being developed here in the U.S., companies have looked abroad to demonstrate their technologies because of a perception of expensive and arduous U.S. regulations. Removing unnecessary barriers to nuclear energy are essential to meeting clean, reliable electricity needs, our national security objectives, and global emission reduction objectives. But thanks to the work of Congress and the U.S. Department of Energy over the past several years, those perceptions are changing and more support for research & development, demonstration projects, fuel chain supply projects, and getting technologies to market are becoming more common.

HB 434 would signal to the federal government and advanced nuclear technology companies that Ohio is willing and equipped to provide the innovation and workforce needed to bring these technologies to market.

Thank you again for allowing me to submit written testimony in support of HB 434. If you have any questions for me, I would be happy to meet with committee members.