

February 14, 2022

To: Chairman Stephens, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Weinstein and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Re: Opponent Testimony on Ohio House Bill 434

Any proposal that authorizes potentially unlimited taxpayer funds mainly benefitting a single company indicates a lack of oversight and potential conflicts of interest. The bill does not specify the operational costs projected to support the Ohio Development Authority (ODNA) and the Nominating Council or address the source for this new funding.

HB 434 allows ONDA to assume regulatory powers delegated from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (USNRC), the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE), any U.S. military branch, or similar federal agencies or programs governing the construction and operation of noncommercial power-producing nuclear reactors and the handling of radioactive materials. This will potentially result in a dangerous lack of safeguards to public health and safety. The allowable cost to Ohioans is open-ended. Such costs could include reactor decommissioning, dismantling and disposal of waste, and cost of remediation for leaks, spills, or other accidents.

The nuclear energy industry is proposing new nuclear reactor designs, small modular reactors, specifically including molten salt reactors (MSRs). MSRs face difficult technical problems and cannot be relied on to produce consistent power. According to the International Panel on Fissile Materials, processes used in production of the fuel for these reactors are linked to the potential to make fissile materials used in nuclear weapons which raises the concern for nuclear proliferation.

Experience with MSRs is not encouraging either. Of the two MSRs ever built, the 1954 Aircraft Reactor Experiment that ran for just 100 hours and the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment that operated intermittently from 1965 to 1969. Over those four years, the latter reactor's operations were interrupted 225 times; of these, only 58 were planned. The remaining were due to various unanticipated technical problems.

It is unprecedented for any state to fund nuclear research and development and billing taxpayers for all associated liabilities with no public oversight. A better use of our taxpayer dollars would be to increase investment in renewable energy that would be safer and produce more jobs.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Bryant".

Don Bryant, lifelong Ohio resident