

To: Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
From: Francis Chiappa, PhD, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Re: Opposition to HB 434
Date: December 3, 2022

Dear Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Martin, and members of the committee.

In advance of the committee's December 6 hearing regarding HB434, I would like to express my concerns about this legislation.

HB 434 proposes to create a private, nonprofit corporation to regulate and subsidize nuclear power in Ohio, using 100% taxpayer funds or bond guarantees. The board would be comprised entirely of nuclear engineers from the OSU Department of Nuclear Tech and named execs from firms engaged in designing, building or operating the reactors. The agency's deeds would not have to be publicized because it would be exempt from Ohio's Public Records Act and the Ethics Commission filings that would disclose conflicts of interest. An appointed board with no financial disclosure responsibilities, comprised of people with literally their careers wrapped up in nuclear energy and engineering, with nearly zero outside financial controls. Even the details of the budget they would submit to the General Assembly would be nonpublic.

I question the idea of creating a private entity to promote nuclear power options, one which is entirely publicly funded but without public reporting requirements. Why is not even a portion of this effort privately funded? Because the technology is unproven and these reactors, if built, will produce fissile materials that could easily be developed into nuclear weapons. Private investors won't commit to this technology. So why should Ohio taxpayers do so? This seems an unwise use of public funds. It would be years of before this technology would be able to produce power. Why not use our tax dollars to fund renewable energy sources. These effective and safe technologies are available right now. HB 434 leads us in the wrong direction.