

December 13, 2023

Testimony Against HB 308 by Rev. Gary Witte

Chairperson Kick, Vice chair Lear, Ranking member Rogers and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am Gary Witte, a retired United Church of Christ pastor. I live on the Hilltop in Columbus, Ohio.

I speak in opposition to HB 308.

The Nuclear energy corporations are attempting to convince the public that nuclear energy is “Green energy”. Simply because nuclear energy creates less carbon pollution than oil, coal and gas does not qualify it as green energy. The major environmental concern related to nuclear power is the creation of nuclear waste where it is mined, when it is processed and after it is spent as fuel. This toxic nuclear waste lasts for thousands of years. Furthermore, in Ohio, we only have to look at the community of Piketon to see the devastating effects on that community with cancer rates soaring in that city because of the nuclear facility operating there. A typical reactor will generate 20-30 tons of high-level nuclear waste annually.

I believe that nuclear energy has no place in a safe, clean sustainable future for Ohio. It is both too expensive and too dangerous for the people of Ohio. Real green, renewable energy is better for the environment and our economy and does not put our people at risk of a nuclear meltdown. The possibility of catastrophic accident or a terrorist attack cannot be dismissed. Meltdowns like the ones at Fukushima and Chernobyl released enormous amounts of radiation killing thousands and forcing thousands to flee their homes.

Nuclear energy is diverting attention, resources and investments from a sustainable, clean energy solution we need. It is imperative to stop building new nuclear facilities, phase out old facilities that exist and instead invest in clean renewable energy for a healthy future.

It is time to put nuclear energy behind us. The future is in wind, solar and water. The wise decision is to put our public money into real green energy. On behalf of the people of Piketon and other towns devastated by nuclear energy In Ohio, end nuclear energy now.

Thank you.