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HR 469 - Proponent Testimony
Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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Chairman Hall, Vice Chair Lear, and Ranking Member Rogers, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Resolution 469.

Buckeye Power generates and transmits electricity to the 25 electric distribution cooperatives that provide retail electric service to approximately 1 million Ohioans in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties. Buckeye Power owns all, or part of, four large power generating plants in Ohio that, along with several smaller renewable energy facilities, provide for the electricity needs of our cooperative members in a safe, reliable, cost competitive and environmentally responsible manner. More than ever, the people and businesses we serve across Ohio depend on a reliable and affordable supply of electricity for their economic and personal well-being.

Recently, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) released its final rule on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. This rule, if implemented, will have severe negative consequences, not only for Ohio, but for our nation, by making our electricity supply less reliable and more expensive at a time when demand for electricity is growing substantially.

The rule, as issued by the USEPA, sets unachievable carbon dioxide emission reduction requirements for existing coal-fired power plants, requiring unproven carbon capture technology to operate at removal rates that have never been achieved, followed by the storage of CO₂ in geologic formations underground. It's important to note that permanent CO₂ storage underground is not feasible in many areas, which will require the construction of massive pipeline networks that currently don't exist. The rule goes on to require these facilities be operating by January 1, 2032. The USEPA has received comments from across the power generation industry, explaining that the proposed rule would force the closure of nearly all coal-fired power plants operating in the United States. These coal-fired power plants currently supply approximately 20% of all electricity in the US.

That should be bad enough, but it gets worse. The rule also prevents the construction of new large baseload natural gas power plants unless they have the same unproven carbon capture equipment and CO₂ storage arrangements. This rule will effectively force the shutdown of reliable and fuel-secure baseload coal-fired generation and block the development of reliable and efficient natural

gas baseload generation at the same time when electrification of our economy is accelerating, industrial production is increasing, and data centers are using more and more electricity.

This approach is not only ill-conceived, unrealistic and unachievable, but we also believe it to be dangerous and unlawful. Buckeye Power, along with many other electric suppliers and utilities across the country, will be forced to spend precious time and resources in court, once again, to stop the USEPA from exceeding its statutory authority. The last attempt they made at regulating carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the so-called Clean Power Plan, took nearly 8 years to finally defeat at the US Supreme Court.

Nearly every knowledgeable industry organization with an interest and responsibility to maintain a reliable electric system has provided comments to the USEPA, raising concerns and pointing out the obvious problems with this rule. The list of organizations includes: the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC), the PJM Interconnection (PJM), the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO), the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), along with members of Congress from both political parties. The USEPA has chosen to ignore these concerns and has issued a final rule that will have severe negative impacts on electric system reliability and the cost of electricity to consumers.

If this rule survives the upcoming legal challenges, it will result in the near certain closure of the remaining four coal-fired power plants in Ohio, including our Cardinal Station in Jefferson County, and ultimately the loss of always available, on demand generation from these facilities, loss of good paying jobs, loss of local tax revenues, negative effects on grid reliability and increased electricity prices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments supporting House Resolution 469, urging the USEPA to withdraw this harmful rule. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.