

Thank you Chairman, Ranking Member and distinguished members of the committee -- my name is Travis Irvine and I am the former Libertarian candidate for Governor of Ohio. On behalf of myself, the Libertarian Party of Ohio and nearly 80,000 Ohioans who voted for me in the 2018 election, I'm proud to stand with a multi-partisan alliance and submit my written testimony in opposition to SB 52, which would only add another layer of unnecessary bureaucracy to an already burdensome legal process pertaining to Ohio's renewable energy sector and its resulting jobs. Furthermore, SB 52 will send the wrong message and still *not address the issues* stemming from the corrupt HB 6 nuclear bailout bill that unfortunately continues to decimate and dominate Ohio's energy sector, as well as the integrity in our statehouse.

When the controversial nuclear bailout bill known as HB 6 first reached the Ohio House floor in 2019, barely any Ohioans truly knew what it was and what was in it. As we would later find out, HB 6 was allegedly the plot of a shady group of energy companies, lawmakers and lobbyists who had cooked up a historic pay-to-play bribery scheme. These conspirators allegedly spent \$60 million in dark money on lobbyists and statehouse races to ultimately secure a \$1.5 billion bailout for themselves from the state legislature. Of course, that \$1.5 billion was to be paid for by consumers through increasing energy rates on households, while also cutting energy-saving programs that would have saved them \$4 billion. While the bill was falsely sold as an "Ohio Clean Air Program," its coal and nuclear plant bailouts actually made Ohio the first state to move *backwards* from its renewable energy goals. So overall, HB 6 was a terrible bill to begin with and comes off even worse now, thus setting a broken stage for SB 52.

Like many ill-fated conservative ideas, SB 52 purports to increase local control over renewable energy projects, but what SB 52 actually does is just create *yet another layer of unnecessary bureaucracy over these projects*, after the state already has an extensive process for them to be certified by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB). With the current process, developers already host public information meetings in the communities where projects will be sited prior to filing applications, while the OPSB employs an adjudicatory process in which local residents have the chance to participate in public hearings and negotiate stipulations and conditions for specific energy development projects. I would also be remiss if I didn't point out that elected state representatives should also be part of this process. Passage of SB 52 would potentially send any companies that are investing in facilities and all the jobs and economic development dollars that come with them, to neighboring states. And while I know some of you were fine sending Ohio ratepayers' money to Indiana with HB 6, I would venture to say that this situation is different and we don't want these potential businesses and jobs going elsewhere.

After all, across the political spectrum, Ohioans *are* ready to move forward with renewable energy and see HB 6 get repealed. All SB 52 does is potentially stop renewable energy projects from coming to Ohio, despite the fact that these companies had nothing to do with allegedly buying and selling Ohio's legislators to determine our energy policy. I strongly urge this committee and all Ohio state legislators to take this chance and make sure the elongated tentacles of the corrupt HB 6 scandal is *not* a stain on your political records, the 134th Ohio General Assembly or this institution. Thank you again for this opportunity.

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