

Testimony Before the Senate Public Utilities Committee
Opponent Testimony
Robert White, President, Ohio State Grange
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Chairman Beagle and members of the Senate Public Utilities Committee, my name is Robert White. I am the President of the Ohio State Grange. The Grange is a family, community organization with its roots in agriculture. Founded in 1867, the Grange was formed as a national organization with a local focus. Our members are given the opportunity to learn and grow to their full potential as citizens and leaders.

On behalf of our members I am here today to testify against Senate Bill 128, which has become known as the nuclear bailout bill. This will pass along the cost of the bailout to First Energy's customers. This will cause all businesses in their service area to have to pass the increased cost of doing business on to our customers. And in the case of farmers, these costs get passed along to everyone. When prices are raised for farmers, they are raised for everyone.

This bill will certainly hurt all consumers in the First Energy territory. This is an undue burden upon the farmers of Northern Ohio, who are competing with farmers in other parts of the state and country. What might be a small increase to an individual consumer ends up being a huge increase to a farmer.

What many people don't realize is that farmers make up a significant share of industrial electricity customers. This is because the demand for farm irrigation systems and the special needs of dairy and confinement feeding operations. The amount of electrical power consumed on these livestock operations is increasing with larger farm sizes and the higher level of automation used in more modern farm designs. Variation in electricity consumption between farms is high and is related to the number of electrically powered solutions that are used.

People tend to forget that farmers have high electrical needs. They see the crops growing in the field and think the process is fairly primitive. To get your food from farm to table, however, man must intervene at many steps along the way and many of these ways take electricity.

I come to you today to ask you to think beyond just the First Energy customer. Remember there are many different segments of industry that will be negatively impacted by SB 128. Farming is just one of them.