

**Testimony of Dan Horrigan
Mayor, City of Akron**

**Before the Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee
Hearing on Ohio Senate Bill 128: Zero-Emissions Nuclear Resource Program (ZEN)**

June 8, 2017

Chairman Beagle, Vice Chairman LaRose, and members of the Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee, I'm Dan Horrigan, mayor of Akron. Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 128, which would establish a Zero-Emissions Nuclear Resource Program in Ohio. This legislation supports important environmental and economic progress in our state by helping preserve Ohio's clean-energy nuclear power plants.

As Akron's mayor, I am focused on the health, economic growth and future of the City and its residents. I am also mindful that we belong to the larger Northeast Ohio and statewide communities, all of which stand to benefit from the proposed ZEN legislation. Ohio's two nuclear power plants provide vital benefits to the residents of Akron – and the state as a whole – and we must do everything we can to ensure their continued operation.

In Akron and Summit County, we consider the state's nuclear plants to be an important and unique component of our electric generation portfolio, providing a reliable, around-the-clock supply of electricity, clean air benefits, fuel diversity and security, and economic benefits.

One of my priorities as mayor is to promote a cleaner, healthier environment for my constituents. According to a recent report by the Environment America Research & Policy Center, Akron experienced 188 days of unhealthy air pollution in 2015, the second highest in the state. The American Lung Association ranks the Cleveland-Akron-Canton area among the nation's worst for particle pollution.

Davis-Besse and Perry produce 90 percent of Ohio's carbon-free electricity and emit none of the nitrogen oxides or sulfur dioxides that contribute to harmful ozone and particle pollution. We simply cannot discount the vital role that the state's two nuclear plants play in generating clean

electricity for our residents and businesses. Replacing those megawatts with electricity generated with fossil fuels is simply not an option in a region working to improve its air quality.

In addition to the critical environmental benefits the nuclear plants provide, they also deliver significant local, regional and statewide economic benefits. Together, the two facilities directly employ 1,400 people and support an additional 4,300 jobs statewide and beyond. Approximately 2,300 additional jobs are in the Akron area at FirstEnergy's corporate headquarters and its West Akron Campus. They also contribute nearly \$25 million in state and local tax revenues that support essential services such as local schools and police and fire departments.

The economic benefits created by Ohio's nuclear plants extend well beyond the local communities in which they are located. Millions of dollars are contributed to the regional economy as the plants utilize area companies to support their operations, including industrial painting companies and other local businesses that call Akron home. In addition, nuclear plant employees and their families – especially those from Perry, just about an hour's drive north of Akron – utilize our world-class hospitals, attend our acclaimed University of Akron, and frequent our outstanding entertainment venues including our art and children's museums, Lock 3, Civic Theatre, and Canal Park. Their business ensures that the Akron community continues to grow and prosper.

Before I conclude, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge FirstEnergy's long history as a committed corporate citizen of Akron and the important contributions the company makes to our City's culture and economy. In addition to the more than \$6.9 million donated over the last 10 years to organizations and agencies in Summit County, FirstEnergy has been a primary sponsor of an Akron classic – the All-American Soap Box Derby – and recently became presenting sponsor of the Akron Marathon. The company is also obviously a major employer in Akron, employing 2,468 people. A strong FirstEnergy and a strong Akron community go hand in hand. First Energy is the kind of corporate neighbor every city strives to attract and retain.

I, and this City, simply cannot afford to risk the strength and stability of one of our most important community partners and largest employers.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the residents of Akron to express my strong support for Senate Bill 128. It is with their health, welfare and futures in mind that I encourage you to pass legislation protecting Ohio's clean nuclear plants.