

BEFORE THE SENATE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY OF TERRY JOYCE

BUSINESS MANAGER, BUILDING LABORERS UNION

LOCAL 310



Chairman Beagle and members of the Ohio Senate Public Utilities Committee, my name is Terry Joyce, and I am the Business Manager of the Building Laborers Union Local 310 based in Cleveland. I appreciate this opportunity to express my strong support for Senate Bill 128 – the Zero-Emissions Nuclear Resource Program – or ZEN - legislation.

The Building Laborers Union represents hundreds of workers who are often called upon to support periodic refueling and maintenance outages and other projects at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant and Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station. I also serve as President of the Cleveland Building Trades, which represents over 15,000 tradespeople in Northeast Ohio who also support these plants on a routine basis.

Like others across the country, Ohio's nuclear power plants are facing an uncertain future, and to support their ongoing operation, Local 310 and the Cleveland Building Trades fully back the ZEN.

As I think about the future of Ohio's nuclear plants, I'm repeatedly haunted by questions whose answers I don't really want to think about... How many of our trained workers might retire or move away if these plants are closed? Will fewer opportunities for work make it harder to attract the next generation of trades workers? How will the loss of skilled tradesman impact Ohio's ability to retain and attract businesses going forward? The answers to these questions are chilling, and it's critical that we consider just how much we could lose.

Local 310 has a longstanding relationship with FirstEnergy and has provided trained, safe and skilled construction workers to complete plant projects on time and on budget, time and time again. Our members are proud of the work they do to support safe and reliable electricity

generation, and I can speak personally to the culture of professionalism and safety found at both of Ohio's nuclear plants.

Approximately every 24 months, each of the plants is temporarily shut down to replace some of their fuel, conduct safety inspections and perform routine and preventative maintenance. These refueling and maintenance outages can last anywhere from four to six weeks and require the plants to hire thousands of additional contract workers, including members of Local 310. This highly skilled outage workforce requires boilermakers, ironworkers, laborers, electricians, insulators, pipefitters, bricklayers and other craft who work in around the clock shifts to complete the work safely and efficiently.

These jobs often pay wages far above prevailing incomes and provide a significant boost to local economies. Construction jobs are temporary by nature, but they provide a good living for many families in our great state. We count on each and every construction job opportunity to put food on our tables – particularly the periodic outages and other special projects at Perry and Davis-Besse.

Our members depend on nuclear plant work to make ends meet for their families, and there simply is no replacement for those jobs. If our members lose the opportunity to work in these plants, they will be forced look to other states for well-paying jobs.

Closure of the plants would not only create great uncertainty for our members, but also for the other businesses they serve. Not only do other businesses in Ohio depend on our members, but the communities around the plants have also come to depend on us. When thousands of additional workers temporarily relocate to be near the plants, they provide a significant economic boost to local hotels, restaurants, gas stations, laundromats and other establishments who all experience an exponential increase in business.

Allowing Perry and Davis-Besse to close prematurely would have an extremely detrimental impact on the ability of our members to earn a good living and support their families. We need a stable industrial base in Ohio, not only for our members and other plant employees, but also as a strong foundation for our state and local economies. I urge you to support union families and our communities by supporting ZEN. Thank you.