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Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chair Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 6
Testimony of Rachael Estes, Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs
Apex Clean Energy

June 25, 2019

Chair Wilson, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Rachael Estes and I am the Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager for Apex Clean Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to share our company's concerns about Ohio House Bill 6.

We are a Virginia-based renewable energy company that has commercialized \$4.5 billion in renewable energy projects and has 15 GW under development across the country. We currently have three wind projects in development in northern Ohio that, in total, would provide over 800 MW of clean, carbon-free energy. These projects represent a combined \$320 million in direct investment that would create 365 jobs in Ohio.

We are focusing our testimony today on the wind referendum provision in the House-passed HB6. Including this provision in the final version of HB6 would send a troubling message to companies seeking to do business in the state and would run counter to the bill's broader aims of encouraging in-state electric generation. Ohio already has a robust process that allows local input on the state permitting process, and so it is double jeopardy for a company to go through that entire process, including local input, to then have its certificate taken away after the fact. Additionally, too our knowledge, there is no other energy source subject to a public referendum in the state. This provision sets a problematic precedent for other generation technologies, or indeed, any other infrastructure project.

This is an anti-business and anti-investment provision that threatens jobs and investments in local communities. Each year, wind projects pay more than \$1 billion to state and local governments and private landowners nationwide.¹ Wind projects have strong positive economic ripple effects throughout communities, from county tax revenue and landowner lease payments to local construction jobs, vendor fairs, and restaurant and hotel occupancy. Paulding County, which has seen \$700 million in renewable energy investments since 2013, actually received a boost in its bond rating from an A1 to an Aa3 by Moody's Investor Service.²

We wholeheartedly support an effort to move Ohio toward a cleaner energy future and would be happy to work with the legislature to help plan for a such a time. However, the wind referendum provision would halt wind development and hurt, not help, Ohio's transition to clean power by reversing the regulatory certainty developers and investors rely on to make business decisions and investments in the state.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on HB6 and would welcome an open dialogue moving forward to ensure a prosperous and robust renewable energy future in Ohio.

Thank you,

Rachael Estes
Manager, Government and Regulatory Affairs
Apex Clean Energy

¹ <https://www.awea.org/wind-101/basics-of-wind-energy/wind-facts-at-a-glance>

² https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-upgrades-Paulding-County-OHs-GO-to-Aa3--PR_905632179