

My name is Rachael Belz. I'm the Director of the Ohio Consumers Power Alliance, a non-partisan, statewide consumer advocacy alliance focused on keeping electric rates low by diversifying Ohio's energy portfolio.

I'm also a resident of the City of Cincinnati, where we've prioritized supporting clean energy for our city's electricity for nearly a decade. We're very proud to be building the largest municipal solar array in the nation in nearby Highland County.

This morning I was in attendance at a press conference held by the cities of Cincinnati and Columbus who joined together to file a lawsuit to stop the state from collecting utility fees associated with House Bill 6 -- fees that would cost Cincinnati residents an additional \$10 million dollars a year, and Columbus residents an additional \$25 million per year. All because the FirstEnergy companies corralled \$61 million into their corruption and bribery scheme to get HB 6 passed at all.

I support this lawsuit, though it shouldn't be necessary. And it's not at all shocking who they filed suit against. The lawsuit, filed today in Franklin County Common Pleas Court, names FirstEnergy Corp.; Ohio Public Utilities Commission chairman Sam Randazzo and state Treasurer Robert Sprague. It seeks a court injunction to block the new fee.

The bigger question is -- during a pandemic that currently has no end, and with all of the economic uncertainty in Ohioans lives -- why should we continue to pay for FirstEnergy and Larry Householders' bribes and greed? Where does the buck ACTUALLY stop here in Ohio? It could stop with the legislature -- who initially passed this at the end of the nasty HB 6 fight by only ONE VOTE. It seems like it could stop with Governor DeWine, who says he supports all energy sources, but signed HB 6 as quickly as he could. SO where does the buck stop in Ohio? God help us if the buck stops with FirstEnergy and Energy Harbor.