

Sub HB 104 Testimony

Good morning, my name is Lee Blackburn, I currently reside in Pataskala, Ohio and I write in opposition to Sub HB 104. I have been following this bill since it was first introduced back in 2018 as HB 771. And while I have had a number of opportunities to testify against this extremely dangerous bill, I haven't done so on the mistaken belief that it was such a bad bill it would surely die in committee.

I had previously lived outside Jackson, Ohio, some 20 miles from the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, known locally as the A-plant. The A-plant is one of three federal facilities built during the cold war to enrich uranium to weapons-grade for nuclear bombs and warheads. And while the Department of Energy has spent over \$6.7 billion on cleaning up the site and deactivating two of the three process buildings in preparation for demolition, the site is still being used to enrich uranium, to process depleted uranium for enhanced warhead detonation and as the location for one or more advanced nuclear reactors.

I mention this to note the Department of Energy is already doing work similar to that called for in Sub HB 104 and to highlight the huge costs involved. \$6.7 billion for cleanup is just the tip of the iceberg of total cleanup costs and is indicative of the exorbitant costs that will be incurred by the Nuclear Development Authority ("NDA") (which, incidentally, is answerable to no one), once this boondoggle goes sideways. Indeed, when asked in testimony by Senator Ecklund who the NDA would be answerable to, Rep. Stein, the sponsor of this horrid bill, was unable to provide an answer. In addition, Sub HB 104 has been so sanitized in its reduction from 34 pages as initially introduced in the House, to just 10 pages as passed, there is no mention whatsoever of costs. Plus, the meaning of language has been so disguised, it would be easily missed without close scrutiny.

For example, the initial version referred to eminent domain. Now, that's simply referred to as private property being acquired. Or the lack of any reference to nuclear reprocessing. It's simply referred to as recycling or nuclear waste reduction. And by the way, the only commercial reprocessing ever done in this country was done at West Valley, New York, and that site is so contaminated, it's estimated the cost to clean it up will be in the tens of billions. That's billions with a "B". My favorite sanitization however, is all references to eGeneration have now been removed entirely, even though this bill has been written specifically for them.

eGeneration is a proponent of thorium molten salt reactors. The same reactors mentioned in sponsor testimony provided by Rep. Stein before this committee on July 21, 2020. Unfortunately, there are currently no operational thorium reactors in existence today. This is due to a number of reasons; they're extremely expensive to build, molten salt is highly corrosive and most importantly, thorium doesn't fission on its own, it requires uranium-233 to kick start the process. And U-233 can easily be used to make dirty bombs.

I could go on about how terrible this bill is but I'll not waste any more time. Suffice it to say that a legislature that would pass a bill as disgusting as HB 6 and then refuse to repeal it, will pass pretty much anything.