

Dear Senator/Governor

The Ohio House of Representatives recently passed HB 6 – a bill which will dismantle Ohio’s successful renewable energy and energy efficiency program. On behalf of Audubon’s 45,000 members in Ohio, we are writing you to ask that you stop this misguided policy from taking effect.

From the prairies in the west, to unglaciated Appalachian plateaus to the south and east, and of course our great Lake Erie in the north—the biodiversity in Ohio is critical to the health and vitality of more than 400 birds and countless wildlife. In addition to being important for our state’s natural heritage, birds are also important pollinators for our agriculture industry and the money that birdwatchers spend support local businesses.

A study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that 2.4 million Ohioans watch birds and that 3.5 million wildlife watchers spent \$2 billion dollars here for equipment, supplies and travel in one year. In springtime, close to 100,000 people from 32 countries spend \$40 million in northwest Ohio alone to enjoy our birds as they prepare to cross Lake Erie.

Birds also tell us that we must take action to combat climate change. [Audubon’s Birds and Climate Report](#) found that more than half of all North American bird species are endangered or threatened by climate change if global warming, which is exacerbated by carbon emissions, continues at its current pace. By 2080, Ohio will no longer be suitable for many of our favorite birds and they will be forced north in desperate search of adequate habitat. Future generations may never know the fiery red of a Scarlet Tanager or the bubbly buzzes and trills of a Bobolink. That’s not only a terrible loss for nature, but also a detrimental impact to the economic health of Ohio’s communities.

Ohio’s renewable energy and energy efficiency standards have been helping reduce carbon emissions while delivering significant net benefits to consumers since they were first enacted. In 2008, Ohio made a commitment to reduce harmful emissions and propel our state and economy into the future. This was a big win for birds and wildlife.

HB 6 will reverse the progress made by Ohio’s clean energy program and put at risk the more than 112,000 clean energy jobs that currently exist in the state. This will result in more fossil fuel energy use and more harmful emissions in our air. This legislation is not the investment in clean air, sustainable jobs and economic growth that our state deserves. While it can be beneficial to have nuclear power as part of a carbon-free energy mix, bailing out two aging nuclear power plants at the expense of our clean energy future would not be.

Energy efficiency and renewable energy are vital components to protecting Ohio’s birds and wildlife from the threat of climate change and to ensuring all Ohioans have access to safe and affordable energy. HB 6 is a missed opportunity by the legislature to begin working on comprehensive energy policy. The National Audubon Society urges Governor DeWine and members of the General Assembly to reject HB 6, and instead, take this opportunity to lead on energy policy that will that will move us forward, not in reverse.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name

Title

Chapter Name