

Subsidizers May Be Checked

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"FirstEnergy Solutions might not want to spend its bailout money just yet," warns a story in *Crain's Cleveland Business*.

At issue? A possible statewide referendum on House Bill 6.

HB6 would, according to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "gut Ohio's green-energy mandates and set up customer-funded subsidies to nuclear and coal power plants." It passed the majority Republican state House "thanks to key support from several House Democrats."

Passage of HB6 through both houses of the Ohio Legislature and its signature by Governor Mike

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DeWine would force Ohio ratepayers to fork over roughly \$150 million in subsidies to FirstEnergy Solutions for its two nuclear power plants.

Except for one thing — in Ohio, voters possess a powerful political weapon: the referendum.



Already a diverse coalition of opponents to the bill has formed Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts, filed a referendum and kicked off a petition drive that has "until October 21, 2019, to collect the 265,774 required signatures."

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"Many of the forces that fueled the Trump presidency, before 2016 — I'm talking the Tea Party and others — could be supportive in undoing this bill," explains Paul Beck, former chair of Ohio State University's political science department. "And so could people on the left. You may find an incredible divergent group of people aligned with each other."

"Liberals hate that it subsidizes dirty coal plants," reports *Crain's*. "Many conservatives hate that it picks winners and losers by subsidizing one industry over another."

Thankfully, the fate of the giveaway rests in the hands of Ohioans, not their subsidy-loving representatives.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.