

**Testimony of Mike Pries
Dauphin County Commissioner
Co-Chair, Clean Jobs for Pennsylvania
Pa. House Consumer Affairs Committee**

April 8, 2019

Good morning. My name is Mike Pries and I am a Dauphin County Commissioner. I am also proud to serve as co-chair of the Clean Jobs for Pennsylvania coalition. When this broad-based community coalition was formed almost two years ago, we sounded the alarm for the need for a state solution to place nuclear power on equal footing with other zero-emission energy sources in Pennsylvania. Without action, Three Mile Island will shut down prematurely this fall and the two-unit Beaver Valley plant in 2021. I fear our state's three other nuclear plants will not be far behind. So, I applaud the committee for holding this hearing today as the clock is ticking on a solution to this extremely important issue.

This morning I would like to address the significant positive local impact we see from having TMI operate in our community. I know from talking to my colleagues that these same impacts are felt in the other Pennsylvania communities near nuclear plants as well.

TMI is an asset to our community in so many ways. It is a major employer for our local residents, providing close to 700 well-paying, steady jobs. These people buy homes in our neighborhoods, have kids in our schools and volunteer in our local fire companies. They are part of us. Beyond the permanent jobs, there are the tangential services and companies that rely on TMI and its employees—local restaurants, stores, contractors, etc. That's not to mention the influx of workers

who come in during regularly scheduled outages. During these maintenance outages TMI employs about 1200 to 1600 supplemental workers for a period of 4-6 weeks. These folks stay in local hotels, eat in our restaurants and shop in our stores. If the state legislature takes action, TMI will perform another refueling outage this fall creating these additional jobs. Many of these men and women live in the area and are members of the Central PA Building and Construction Trades. If action is not taken, all of these jobs will be lost forever. As a county commissioner, I know job retention is as important as job creation.

With these workers comes a tax base that our community depends upon as well. TMI itself contributes more than one million dollars in property taxes each year. This is in addition to the taxes that TMI employees pay— the total TMI payroll comes in around \$60 million annually. This loss would impact our police force, our fire departments and especially our schools. The closure of TMI would result in a loss of \$700,000 in tax revenue for the Lower Dauphin School District alone. Our local taxing authorities will have to cut services or increase taxes. That is a reality.

From a community giving perspective, TMI and its employees are extremely generous and contribute more than \$300,000 in charitable giving each year to area non-profits. They are a top giver to our United Way Agency, prime sponsor of a mobile bookmobile that provide books and computer access to underserved areas of our community. TMI has contributed close to \$700,000 to the Londonderry Fire Company allowing them to purchase much needed safety equipment without raising taxes on the residents who benefit.

Speaking of first responders, TMI paid \$425,000 in fees to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in 2018. PEMA redistributes most of these funds to counties and municipalities around TMI for all hazard emergency planning. Those fees dry up in about a year or two if the plant closes. It's likely that full-time emergency management positions will be lost as a result and so will much needed training and drills. It's because TMI funds that position at the county. TMI also currently provides all-hazard emergency management training to our local fire companies. That service will be discontinued if the plant closes.

Beyond its significant positive socio-economic impact, TMI generates enough zero-emission energy for 800,000 homes without polluting our air. In fact, TMI generates more zero-emission energy than all other renewable energy sources in Pennsylvania **COMBINED**. Why in the world would we not want to include nuclear in our state's zero-emission program?

Pennsylvania should learn from the cautionary example of Vermont and Wisconsin, which recently allowed nuclear plants to close prematurely. Studies and experiences in other states show that when nuclear plants shut down, the cost of electricity increases. Among the hardest hit by electricity price increases are senior citizens on fixed incomes. Further, since the single-unit Vermont Yankee plant closed in 2014 the local municipality cut its budget by 20 percent and eliminated its police force. This after residents saw a 20 percent property tax increase! In Wisconsin, electricity prices increased by 5 percent after the early closing of the single-unit Kewaunee Power Station and Kewaunee County lost 30

percent of its tax revenue. In both states greenhouse gas emissions increased after the plants closed. This is what awaits us here in Pennsylvania without action.

This issue is not unique to Pennsylvania. When faced with similar challenges, New York, Illinois, New Jersey and Connecticut have all adopted Zero-Emissions Certificate (ZEC) programs and have been able to keep nuclear plants operating and their air cleaner. I believe its time for Pennsylvania to do the same.

And you know what? Pennsylvanians think it's time to do the same, too. Our coalition, just last week, asked the experts at Harper Polling here in Harrisburg to conduct a statewide poll of 500 likely voters. The survey found that not only do 63% have a favorable opinion of nuclear power, 72% said they would be more likely to vote for a State Legislator who fights in Harrisburg to keep nuclear power plants open. Only 9% said they'd be less likely to vote for you. And more to the point of HB 11, when asked if they would favor a proposal being considered which would add nuclear energy to Pennsylvania's AEPS, giving nuclear energy many of the same incentives as wind, solar, and hydroelectric and would help keep electricity prices in check, 75% said they're in favor. That's 3 out of 4 likely voters who said just last week that they would support HB 11.

The clock is ticking. My constituents ... your constituents ... are counting on you to get this done. Let's not look back five years from now and ask ourselves, why did we allow these jobs -- these economic engines -- to get away? I urge you to take prompt action to pass House Bill 11 to ensure our state continues to enjoy the economic, environmental and reliability of our zero-emission nuclear power plants.