

Testimony of Kevin Ledet
Huron County, Ohio
In support of HB401
Nov 19th 2019

Chairman Vitale, Vice Chairman Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide oral testimony in support HB401. I would like to stress the need for a local referendum opportunity for the townships slated to host approved for wind projects.

This bill is important for the safety, well-being and protection of Ohio citizens who find themselves inside of or near the footprint of an industrial wind project. I will be referencing Greenwich Wind Park, also known as Crosswinds Wind Power. This wind project has been approved by the OPSB for Greenwich Township, Huron County Ohio, the 57th House district represented by Representative Dick Stein who is a co-sponsor of the bill, and I thank him. I have been a resident of Greenwich Township for 43 years.

The Greenwich wind project is approved for up to 60 megawatts and consists of 25 wind turbines. There are 29 participating property owners that are signed up for this project. What is incredible to me is that 13 of these 25 turbines are to be placed on land that belongs to absentee landowners. More astonishing is that 11 of these 13 turbines are to be placed on land that is owned by foreign investors from Germany.

What this means is that 52% of the turbines for this project will be placed on land that belongs to people who don't live in Greenwich Township. The outcome of this is that people who don't live here have the ability to make a devastating impact on the people that do live here. As of this moment, communities like Greenwich Township have had no recourse to have our voices truly heard. This bill, by granting the right of a local referendum, will give the members of the affected townships the right to vote on the project that will directly affect them.

The 29 participating owners are contrasted against a group of 124 non-participating adjacent property owners that were defined by the developer, Windlab. We took a survey of the 124 non-participating adjacent property owners back in 2014 and this survey with signatures can be found on the OPSB website in the public comments section. There were 75 non-participating adjacent property owners that responded. 73 out of the 75 are against the project. 97 % against the project. If you concede that the 29 participating property owners are still for the project that translates to 31 for and 73 against. Roughly 70% against. How can such numbers be overlooked?

We know that the Greenwich Wind project will not be affected by this bill because it has already been issued a certificate. But if the developer wishes to expand or if another developer comes to Huron County, we will have a more level playing field. The passage of this bill will correct the injustice of preempting our local zoning and taking away our right to determine the character of our own community. Going forward, this injustice will be rectified in the truly American way - the ballot.

I've also heard the argument that a payment in lieu of taxes PILOT is a means of local control, I beg to differ with that. Greenwich Township trustees unanimously denied the PILOT to Swift Current and they are still going to build.

Early on in Apex's Emerson Creek project in Huron and Erie Counties the developer said they would not build without a PILOT. The Huron County commissioners passed a resolution stating that when Apex completes all the necessary paperwork that they would then grant Apex's Emerson Creek a PILOT. After that the community got involved with the commissioners and overwhelmingly sought to have this resolution rescinded. The Erie County commissioners later that year denied Apex a PILOT for the portion of Emerson Creek that was to be built in their county. The Huron County commissioners, after studying the project further, rescinded the resolution about the PILOT and later that month they denied the PILOT for Emerson Creek.

The developer, Apex, now says they will proceed without the PILOT. Enough said about a PILOT being a means of local control. The only thing a PILOT controls, by diminishing, is the true revenue a community should get from a project.

My closing thought on this matter is a question. Early in the Greenwich project, and in many meetings with Apex at the Huron County Commissioner's office, the developers often made remarks about how well they have been received in the respective communities. They talked about how they are being transparent and the communities are welcoming and in favor of the projects. If that is truly the case, then why is the wind industry so dead set against a host community having the ability to vote on the issue?

Thank you. Kevin Ledet