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November 17, 2019

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Dear Chairman Vitale and Members of the Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB401, a bill that would allow residents of a township to gather enough signatures from other local township residents for the purpose of placing a referendum vote on the ballot for a wind project that is located within that township. There are many reasons that have been brought up both for and against HB401, and I can understand both sides, however, one issue that sticks out is *why* have this bill if the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) is said to be capable of making the very decision that local residents could have the power to overturn? The reason is simple, **LOCAL RESIDENTS LIVE IN THE PROJECT AREA, NOT THE OPSB.** With that being said, ONLY the local residents should have the final decision, not the OPSB. The OPSB's primary task is to gather, review, assess, and eventually decide on the application that was submitted by the wind developer. The information contained in that application is required by the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) and the OPSB Staff is tasked with reviewing the pertinent portions of the developers application as it pertains to the OAC. However, these staff members DO NOT have the pulse of the community, they DO NOT know that there may, in fact, be several other wind projects also proposed around the one that they are reviewing. In the case of my area in Seneca County, we have up to **six projects** slated for development- Republic Wind, Emerson Creek Wind (both currently at the OPSB), Emerson West Wind, Honey Creek Wind, Seneca Wind (also at the OPSB), and Buck Springs Wind (the latter project being "on-paper" at the moment). All but the Seneca Wind project is being developed by Apex Clean Energy which is located in Virginia, while Seneca Wind is being developed by Sustainable Power Group (sPower) which is headquartered in Utah. The OPSB and its staff members DO NOT consider cumulative effect during their decision making process, or property values and home resale, or potential business LOSS, or various tax subsidies such as a PILOT, or visual blight, etc. These items are just simply some of the myriad of reasons why HB401 needs to become law. In addition, what can HB401 hurt? Perhaps the wealthy wind company that is trying to develop in the area? But aside for that, nothing that I can think of, in fact, it could possibly *benefit* the wind developer because it may ultimately show the pulse of the townships' community is *supportive* of wind development. This is what makes HB401 so unique, while not all communities are supportive or even capable of hosting a wind project, others may be, such as townships within Paulding County for example. One final but critical point that may come up could be the argument of why have a wind referendum bill vs. say a bill allowing a vote for fracking? The answer once again is quite simple- townships that may be targeted for a wind project are more vocal for or against the project, or perhaps the visual blight and cumulative effect will be far reaching and everlasting for generations to come. It ends up boiling down to one simple choice, does a township choose to host wind, or instead other potential development such as housing? Hard to say, but only the townships' resident's will know that answer, not the OPSB.

Thank you for time,



Chris Zeman