



**Before the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 401
December 3rd, 2019**

Chair Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Stephanie Kromer, and I am the Director of Energy and Environmental Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer opponent testimony on House Bill 401.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate, and we represent nearly 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

House Bill 401 would permit a local referendum on wind energy projects after they've received Ohio Power Siting Board certification – and even after construction has begun. No other generation source is subject to a similar public referendum, and such a requirement would kill almost every wind project moving forward in the state. This represents a dangerous precedent and reverses the regulatory certainty developers and investors rely on to make business decisions and investments in Ohio.

During the spring, a similar amendment was inserted into another bill but was removed before the bill was voted out of committee. At the time, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce urged removal of this provision because, once a wind project has been approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board, the wind developer has already invested millions of dollars on impact studies, certifications and other pre-development requirements. It would be unreasonable to subject a project to a local referendum this late in the game.

Proposals such as HB 401 do not create a friendlier business climate in Ohio. In fact, they do just the opposite. If passed, this bill would make it less likely wind developers would ever consider doing business in the state, depriving Ohio of economic development opportunities that could generate millions of dollars of tax revenue, create both construction and long-term jobs and contribute to diversifying our economy. If lawmakers believe local residents should have a stronger voice in the process, a more balanced approach is needed. For these reasons, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce opposes HB 401.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, and I will be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

