



Working together for Ohio farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen our communities.

**House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
H.B. 401 Interested Party Testimony
Jenna Beadle, Director of State Policy
December 3, 2019**

Chair Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 401, a bill that will change the current setback standards and prescribe a local referendum process for wind projects.

I would like to begin by explaining a little about Ohio Farm Bureau's policy development process. It is truly grassroots driven as the County Farm Bureaus write, debate, and vote on their local policy and state policy recommendations, which are then voted on by a delegate body comprised of county members from across the state at the Ohio Farm Bureau annual meeting every December. Those policies constitute the OFBF state policy book and are what we use to take positions and advocate for our members.

There are many Farm Bureau members who are who are adamantly opposed to wind development and many outspoken in their support of it, so any position we take has to adhere to Farm Bureau policy that is created at the local level and voted on by over 340 members statewide. Please note there are two competing landowner interests at play in this complex issue—the landowner who wants to enter into a private contract and the adjacent landowner who will be impacted by another's contract—and we must do our best to represent both without giving one greater precedence.

Farm Bureau understands that in order to have wind energy, you must have rules and regulations to ensure wind farms are built safely and that numerous landowner considerations are taken into account. That's why we support wind turbine setback requirements that ensure safety and are based on scientific research. HB 401 creates setbacks that are based on the turbine manufacturer's safety standards, which OFBF supports.

The Ohio Power Siting Board's (OPSB) role in this process, however, is critically important. We support rules and regulations made by OPSB that provide landowner friendly, reasonable, and uniform statewide procedures for siting, placement, construction, and operation of wind farms. OFBF is concerned with diminishing the OPSB's authority over the adjudicatory process that encompasses the siting and operation of all types of generation and transmission assets statewide. Farm Bureau's involvement in OPSB proceedings has shown that this process provides residents, energy service providers, energy consumers, and other interested stakeholders an equal opportunity for advocacy and representation. This opportunity exists for all parties at the local, regional, state, and interstate levels.



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Farm Bureau appreciates this committee’s due diligence in vetting such a complicated topic. There are few subjects that inspire as much emotion as private property rights and wind development, so it can be a daunting challenge to even start the conversation. Thank you for taking the time to thoughtfully consider how to best serve Ohio’s landowners and for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you have.

OFBF Policy

“We support wind turbine setback requirements that ensure safety and are based on scientific research.”

“We support Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) rules, regulations, stipulations, orders and amendments that provide landowner friendly, reasonable and uniform statewide procedures for siting, placement, construction and operation of utility-scale wind and solar farms” (Wind and Solar, 148).