



Seneca County Commissioners

Shayne Thomas | Michael Kerschner | Anthony Paradiso

111 Madison St.  
Tiffin, Ohio 44883

October 10, 2019

Ohio Development Services Agency  
77 S High Street #27  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: SPower – Bloom Project

To Who It May Concern,

On March 28, 2019 the Seneca County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution Number 19-73 titled “Sunsetting Seneca County’s Alternative Energy Zone, Effective June 30, 2019”.

Within this resolution it was stated that “At that time the Alternative Energy Zone will rescind to new applications, thus sunsetting the Alternative Energy Zone program in Seneca County. Although the Seneca Wind and Republic Wind projects are accepted under the 2011 AEZ Agreement, if they must resubmit their application they would no longer be grandfathered under the agreement, based on a determination by the Ohio Power Siting Board”.

It is our understanding that with this resolution in place, SPower would not be grandfathered under the agreement for the Bloom Project.

Also, please be advised that we are in unanimous support of a pending bill from William F Reineke endorsing a referendum vote for alternative energy projects.

With this letter we have submitted a copy of the resolution for your files. This resolution has also been submitted to all other correct departments.

Thank You,

Shayne Thomas

Michael Kerschner

Anthony Paradiso

## **Open letter on local control of utility-scale wind development**

In Seneca County, we have had significant public discourse around the development of wind resources and utility-scale wind farms. We have incredibly engaged citizens and public officials. If wind development moves forward in Ohio, then we feel duty-bound to offer our recommendations for improving the wind-development process.

### **Local Control**

When originally conceived, the Alternative Energy Zone (AEZ) was intended to function as de facto local control. In 2011, the commissioners, with support from local landowners, passed the AEZ in Seneca County. In 2019, this board of commissioners sunset that AEZ. As technology has changed, there has been a significant reduction in the cost to develop projects. Given the dynamic nature of the industry, the current regulations have not kept pace with these changes. The evidence suggests that the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) structure contained within the AEZ is no longer the incentive or control it once was. Projects continue to develop in counties that don't have (Seneca County) or never had (Huron County) an AEZ. It is, therefore, our recommendation that there be an effort undertaken at the Statehouse to return local control.

### **Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)**

Any request of a PILOT should be accompanied by a net present value calculation that keeps the local taxing authorities whole as to the time value of money.

### **Local Notification**

As commissioners, we have lived among our friends and neighbors as they have struggled to understand how this is happening in their community. We recommend that before any development, there should be an early warning letter send to the citizens of the jurisdiction.

Earlier notification, clarity on taxation and stronger local control would be a valuable first step in developing a more balanced relationship between property owners, citizens, communities, elected officials and wind developers.

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

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