

Senate Committee on Energy and Public Utilities
Sub. HB 6
TESTIMONY

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Bellevue, Ohio
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Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee, I wish to provide support to Sub. House Bill 6 and the provision in HB 6 which allows a referendum for townships directly affected by industrial wind development.

I reside in Seneca County's Thompson Township, in the footprint of the Republic Wind LLC. We also own property in Eden Township in the footprint of the Seneca Wind LLC, We have family and friends that live in Erie and Huron Counties, in the footprint of Firelands Wind LLC. Emerson West LLC is another Apex wind project in Thompson Township that has not entered pre-application with the OPSB. Buck Springs Wind LLC, an Apex project just to the west of Thompson Township also has not entered pre-application. Honey Creek LLC by Apex will be to the south/east of our property in Eden Township and it also has not entered the pre-application stage. There is also the Bellevue Wind Farm LLC in Sandusky County with yet another wind developer to the north/west of our home, that has not entered the pre-application stage. We have a total of 7 known wind projects in the Firelands Region of Ohio.

For numerous reasons, my family has refused to sign a Wind Easement Agreement otherwise known as a "Good Neighbor Agreement" (GNA) designed to waive project setbacks and nuisance effects. We contacted both our mortgage holder and our insurance company regarding the impact of signing such an Agreement. Our mortgage holder indicated that the salability of our home would be affected and told us we could not sign such an agreement, placing a permanent lease on our home property.

Our insurance company indicated that we would need additional commercial insurance about \$500/year to cover that exposure. Many of our neighbors in Thompson Township have signed wind easements for an average of \$500 up front and then \$500 a year after the wind project is built. Many of these wind easement agreements were sold by the immediate family member of one of our Thompson Township Trustees, Troy Warner, who just happens to be a leaseholder in Emerson West and Republic Wind LLC.

Although Thompson Township is now full of Wind Easement Agreements on home properties, I have not met one neighbor who thought to call their mortgage holder or insurance company

before signing such an agreement. At the time, our Bellevue School Board was supporting the wind development and “who wouldn’t want to be a friend of wind and the Bellevue Redmen”?

Since the wind projects have been made public, the Bellevue School Board has rescinded their support of wind projects in their district as have many other school districts with concern over the cumulative impacts to our communities.

Unfortunately, the wind developers will not allow homeowners out of these leases which will devalue their properties. In addition to the homes with wind easement leases, thousands of homes within a mile of the 600+ Ft. turbines stand to lose significant property value in the Republic Wind Project alone. The wind industry will counter with their flawed study saying there is no effect on home values. The truth is for every flawed study the wind industry cites there are ten more legitimate studies showing a significant loss of value within a mile or more of the turbines.

This could have property tax revenue impacts on our community. Since two of the Seneca County Commissioners were not responding to local concerns, area residents turned to their township trustees to intervene at the OPSB from the township level. Five townships in the Republic Wind voted to intervene against the project (York, Scipio, Reed, Adams, and Pleasant).

Thompson Township was the only township that did not vote to intervene. Two of the three Thompson Trustees are leaseholders and would benefit financially from the wind development. Those two trustees, Dave Ziegler and Troy Warner would not intervene against their own financial interests. This is yet another reason why local township voters should have a voice in accepting or rejecting the project.

On November 15, 2018 at 5:00 PM, I attended the Ohio Power Siting Board-mandated public meeting in Norwalk for the Firelands Wind project. I was followed closely by Apex employees at this event. I assume it is because I have been vocal locally in opposition to wind development in our area. I had many questions and concerns regarding this wind project. At one point during the meeting, I stopped to speak with a couple I knew from Erie County. I had opened my folder to make a note of the location of one of the turbines in that county. An Apex employee rushed at me and loudly stated “she is signing people up”. I showed her what I had written on my folder but she (Apex employee) proceeded to insist that the sheriff deputies make me leave.

The sheriff deputies were polite and explained that because this was a private venue and Apex had rented it, Apex had the authority to make me leave. I questioned how this could be considered a public event, posted in the Sandusky Register, yet I could be discriminated against in this way. The officers explained that I had done nothing wrong and if it was a public venue, such as a school building, they would not have to make me leave. I did leave as the officers said they would have to charge me with trespassing if I did not leave at the request of Apex. The exchange which occurred between me and the Apex employee/officers was recorded. You can view it at this link: Apex Emerson Creek Public Meeting - 11-15-2018.MOV.

Does the action by Apex send a message to others in the community, that would dare stand up and question wind development? It surely does! Apex is an aggressive out of state developer with deep pockets who apparently has determined they can say or do anything to the people affected by these projects in order to accomplish their goals. They are well aware there is no need for them to conduct themselves in a more collaborative way with the community because the community has no voice in whether or how their projects are built.

My husband and I have lived in this area our entire lives. We have raised four children here. I volunteer and work in this area. We attend church in Bellevue. I can't tell you how many people have come up to me expressing concern over the statements Apex has made about me publicly. I believe that my experience is just one more example of the disregard wind developers show toward the people in their targeted communities. Because we have no say in approving projects or how they will be sited, they really do not think they need to be accountable to us or to take our concerns seriously. And they can throw me out of a public meeting.

Who would wish for a neighbor like that? Why should we have confidence in them? Recently, both Erie and Huron Counties denied tax abatement via PILOT to the Firelands Wind LLC proposed by Apex. That has not stopped them. Apex representatives have said publicly that they can proceed without a PILOT being granted. There is no mechanism in place to give local communities a voice before being impacted by wind development. The right of referendum is a simple, straight forward solution.

Dayna Baird Payne of AWEA and Terrence O'Donnell of the Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition have repeatedly testified in the General Assembly that projects are not built where PILOT is denied. This is false. In fact, the Innogy Scioto Ridge project had their groundbreaking in Hardin and Logan County last week despite having been denied PILOT in Logan County. Please give those directly affected by wind development the ability to have a voice. These wind energy companies have been working under a cloak of obscurity in our counties for years. It just could be that if wind developers knew local communities had a voice in the matter, they would respect us and be transparent from the very outset of planning these projects.