

Zachary Kyle West

Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

Sub. House Bill 6

Proponent Testimony

June 19, 2019

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams, Members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee, I write to ask that for your support of House Bill 6 and the provision added by Representative Reineke known as the “Reineke Referendum”.

I am a third generation resident of Seneca County. After twelve years of pursuing a higher education and training throughout the State of Ohio, I am now a licensed physician. Upon my return to my hometown, I was made aware and subsequently became involved with the ongoing issues and concerns surrounding multiple proposed industrial wind projects. There exists a multitude of growing concerns with regards to the currently proposed industrial wind projects. My professional oath maintains that I “be ever vigilant in aiding in the general welfare of the community” and, therefore, I would like to focus on one aspect impacting the health and wellbeing of my community when it comes to wind projects.

The issue of access to air ambulance service is one the residents of Seneca County face with the proposed industrial wind projects. The three announced projects include approximately 200 turbines towering upwards of 650 feet in height (an estimated four unannounced projects remain in development with details still unknown). Trauma-related injuries are one of the leading causes of death in America.¹ Expeditious treatment has long been a tenet of trauma care and patients have been shown to have improved survival (including a 57.0% decrease in mortality) when transported by air ambulance as compared to ground ambulance.² Access to emergency services for the Seneca County region continues to improve as a result of the work of multiple organizations. The region is serviced by Mercy Health Life Flight and the nearest adult level one trauma centers are located in Toledo, Ohio.³ In the unfortunate event such services are needed, it has become a common occurrence that patients be air-lifted from the scene. The air ambulance director was asked about the impact of wind turbine projects on their operations and their response is included (Addendum A and Addendum B). It has been concluded there indeed are factors with the wind turbine projects that would impact air ambulance services and that the need may arise to utilize a Predesignated Landing Zone (PDLZ) requiring that patients be transported from the scene to an area safe for landing. Ultimately, there exists the potential for delay in the care of patients with the introduction of wind turbines and that delay can have substantial consequences.

The issue with air ambulance services in Ohio is not unique to Seneca County. During House Energy and Natural Resources Committee testimony on May 23, 2019, Committee Chairman Representative Nino Vitale disclosed his own observations and concerns as a licensed pilot with regards to a proposed wind turbine project for Champaign County and furthermore disclosed the ongoing issues regarding air ambulance service for his region as related to said projects.⁴

The decision to construct an industrial wind project must involve local community input. With a multitude of factors to be considered, including access to emergency services, the cost versus benefit

analysis can only be rendered by those most impacted. The Reineke Referendum adds a much needed missing element to the current Ohio Power Siting Board Standard Application Process.⁵ The decision to potentially jeopardize air ambulance and lifesaving services is one reserved only by the residents in the affected community and is not to be subjected to corporations or bureaucrats. I sincerely hope you will recognize the need for a community voice in the current process and support the Reineke Referendum.

Sincerely,

Zachary K. West DO, MPH
Tiffin, Ohio

1. <http://www.aast.org/trauma-facts>
2. <https://tsaco.bmj.com/content/4/1/e000211#ref-1>
3. <https://www.ems.ohio.gov/trauma-system.aspx>
4. <https://ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-house-energy-and-natural-resources-committee-5-23-2019>
(Time: 52:20)
5. <https://www.opsb.ohio.gov/opsb/?LinkServID=AFBB7552-C587-C103-CBF9480A93645E04>



October 4, 2018

**Mercy St. Vincent Medical Center
St. Rita's Medical Center**
Critical Care Transport Network
2213 Cherry Street
Toledo, Ohio 43608-2691
(419) 251-4290 Fax: (419) 251-4293

Thank you for taking the time to contact Life Flight in regard to our flight operations in your area. We have no specific regulations or policies that relate to wind-turbines. We do however, have FAA regulations that govern how HAA (Helicopter Air Ambulance) helicopters are to be operated in the United States. I have attached a copy of the specific regulation, FAR 135.615, for your review. The specific guidance for us regarding obstacle clearance is under Paragraph **(b) Enroute**.

The "Reader's Digest" version of what it says - we as pilots must determine obstacles along our route of flight and must also identify the highest one and be able to clear it by 300ft during the day or by 500ft at night while also staying 500ft below the cloud "ceiling" above us.

If the said obstacle happens to be a wind-farm, it will be depicted on our FAA Approved maps. We in turn will have to comply with the above regulation. As far as landing in the vicinity of the wind-farm our pilots would assess the safety of the Landing Zone like any other. They will perform a high circling pattern while communicating with Fire, EMS, or Law Enforcement personnel via radio to confirm any obstacles and hazards prior to landing.

There is one caveat to this, if the proposed wind-turbine were to be constructed within one and a half miles or less of a PDLZ (Predesignated Landing Zone), we would be opposed to the construction. An obstacle like a wind-turbine would degrade our ability to serve patients brought to us by Fire and EMS for expedited helicopter transport to a hospital. We define a PDLZ as any concrete or asphalt area that has been improved for helicopter landings by FAA recommended lighting, markings, and obstacle clearance. And that the PDLZ is maintained by a municipal or private entity. Meaning it is kept clear of snow and ice in the winter and that it is secure for landing by Fire, EMS or Law Enforcement prior to aircraft arrival for patient pickup.

I hope this answers your question, please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information.

W. Mike Conrad

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Mike Conrad", is written over a white background.

**Director Mercy Health Life Flight Network
Director of Operations Life Flight
[567-525-1167](tel:567-525-1167) Mobile
[419-251-4588](tel:419-251-4588) Office**

§ 135.615 VFR flight planning.

(a) *Pre-flight.* Prior to conducting VFR operations, the pilot in command must -

- (1) Determine the minimum safe cruise altitude by evaluating the terrain and obstacles along the planned route of flight;
- (2) Identify and document the highest obstacle along the planned route of flight; and
- (3) Using the minimum safe cruise altitudes in paragraphs (b)(1)-(2) of this section, determine the minimum required ceiling and visibility to conduct the planned flight by applying the weather minimums appropriate to the class of airspace for the planned flight.

(b) *Enroute.* While conducting VFR operations, the pilot in command must ensure that all terrain and obstacles along the route of flight are cleared vertically by no less than the following:

- (1) 300 feet for day operations.
- (2) 500 feet for night operations.

(c) *Rerouting the planned flight path.* A pilot in command may deviate from the planned flight path for reasons such as weather conditions or operational considerations. Such deviations do not relieve the pilot in command of the weather requirements or the requirements for terrain and obstacle clearance contained in this part and in part 91 of this chapter. Rerouting, change in destination, or other changes to the planned flight that occur while the helicopter is on the ground at an intermediate stop require evaluation of the new route in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) *Operations manual.* Each certificate holder must document its VFR flight planning procedures in its operations manual.