

## **Intro to Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee,**

**28 Feb 2020**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Parker, I am an Oxford Township Trustee from Erie County in my 4<sup>th</sup> term and also past President and current Vice-President of the Erie County Township Association. I am a life long resident of Erie County. I wish to thank you for allowing me to personally present proponent testimony for SB 234 on behalf of the Erie County Township Association.

I wish to read to you the short letter expressing support of HB 401 and SB234 sent to the Ohio Township Association for action that was also copied to all sponsors of the bills.

Upon completion of reading of the letter I will make some brief explanatory comments and conclude with a request for questions.

However, before proceeding to the letter, a little background information on Erie County and the APEX Emerson Creek project is in order: Erie County has nine townships, with the county seat in Sandusky. Two of the nine townships in Erie County are directly impacted by the Emerson Creek Wind Project; Oxford and Groton. Original proposal for the project was 11 turbines in Oxford and 14 turbines in Groton. Groton and Oxford Townships (6 miles square each) both have approx. 1100 residents with homes interspersed throughout. All townships are zoned, and most of the townships are primarily zoned "ag-residential", the exception being Perkins Twp. Oxford Township is currently home of the Orion project test facility (vacuum chamber), located in NASA Plum Brook Station, Oxford and Perkins Twps. Perkins is immediately to the north and adjacent to Oxford Twp, and it has become largely residential with a booming service and mercantile industry having major income from tourism. Fortunately, to help make up for the loss of income from industry, tourism has become the mainstay of the economy due to the attraction of Lake Erie, Sandusky Bay, the Islands, and most of all Cedar Point.

The letter attached (read):

Summary and concluding remarks:

As you can see ECTA firmly supports the bills. All of Erie County Townships adopted zoning laws that residents initially voted on and approved decade ago. Local

control of zoning continues through election of trustees and their appointment of members to the zoning and appeals boards. It just seems appropriate to extend that control to projects of large geographic impact. As I had reviewed the bills and composed the letter, it was easy to see that the bills have the best interests of Ohio residents at heart, those being; 1. the right to vote on projects of such large geographic magnitude and impact and 2. safety. The referendum portion of the bill should be the easiest to sell to Ohioans. Some counties and townships may be overwhelmingly in favor of wind energy projects as they have few alternative means for income, and some counties townships, such as in Erie County, may vote entirely differently due to the adverse impact on property values and other means of income such as tourism. In either case, it is in the best interests of the people to allow them to vote as they see fit. In addition, not to underplay the safety aspect of the bills, as a nuclear power plant operator, engineer, and executive for 38 years, I personally understand the aspects of safety in regard to safety limits, legal limits, margins of safety, and manufacturer recommended limits on safety. Though harder to explain to the public and arguably more contentious among technical people, the bills will increase the margin for safety and make that margin flexible for the long term and should thus be passed for those reasons also.

Thank you for your consideration and patience in listening.

I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.

13 Dec 2019

## ERIE COUNTY TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION



From: Erie County Township Association

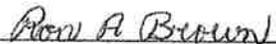
To: Board of Directors, Ohio Township Association

CC: Representatives - Reineke, Cross, Hambley, Jones, Lang, Lipps, Perales, Richardson, Riedel, Seitz, Smith, Stein, Swearingen and Senators – McColley, Rulli, Hoagland, Manning, S. Huffman, Coley, Brenner, Burke, M. Huffman, Gavarone

Subject: **SUPPORT FOR H.B. 401 AND S.B. 234 REGARDS REGULATION OF WIND FARMS AND WIND TURBINE SETBACKS**

At a regular meeting of the Erie County Township Association held on 12 December 2019 with a majority of members present, the Erie County Township Association voted unanimously to request that the Ohio Township Association carefully review and consider public backing of H.B.401 and S.B. 234. Many of you may already know the content of the bills is “to amend sections 4906.10, 4906.13, 4906.20, and 4906.201; to amend, for the purpose of adopting a new section number as indicated in parentheses, section 519.214 (519.215); and to enact new section 519.214 and sections 4906.101 and 4906.203 of the Revised Code to require inclusion of safety specifications in wind farm certificate applications, to modify wind turbine setbacks, and to permit a township referendum vote on certain wind farm certificates”. The important and key points of these bills are summed up in two words, safety and vote.

The Erie County Township Association endorses these two bills because they put township residents’ safety and voice in government foremost in regard to industrial wind farm projects that can have a large impact on them and their community. Members also realize, that by supporting the bill, they are not endorsing or rejecting industrial windfarm projects, but are simply improving safety standards and constituents voice in government. Our membership, as typical of most township official bodies, firmly believes that the government closest to the people has the best feel for the interests of its voters and these two bills have the core interests of the voters and local control as their theme. For these reasons we respectfully request your support.

  
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MGP/mgp