



Opponent Testimony on Ohio Senate Bill 234
Testimony of Mikayla Pieper
Executive Director, Paulding Chamber of Commerce
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, Chair Steve Wilson
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Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee: thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony as an opponent to Senate Bill 234. My name is Mikayla Pieper, Executive Director of the Paulding Chamber of Commerce.

The Paulding Chamber is dedicated to the economic health and vitality of Paulding County and the entire northwest Ohio region. We are committed to working with the business community, educators, and government to establish the best possible business environment.

No greater investment than wind farm development has provided economic growth for our county. Wind farms are our No. 1 source of tax revenue in Paulding County, providing an impressive new tax revenue for our schools, new income for area landowners and new revenues for local businesses who supply goods and services to the wind energy companies. In addition, wind has brought hundreds of new, temporary jobs during the construction phase as well as permanent wind farm jobs with highly-paid, highly-trained staff. Because of these benefits, **wind farm development has been the No. 1 opportunity for economic growth in Paulding County as well as other counties in Ohio with wind farms.**

For these reasons, I request you oppose SB 234, which would single out wind energy development for local referenda that could result in cancellation of a project *after* permitting. This would harm property rights, impose burdensome new red tape, and create a chilling effect on wind investment that would act as a *de facto* ban.

Other energy industries, including natural gas, coal, and nuclear power, do not face similar obstacles, nor do other forms of non-energy development. This double standard is over-reach: a government-imposed barrier to block wind farm development.

As Sarah E. Hunt, CEO of the Joseph Rainey Center for Public Policy recently shared: “What smart, innovative company will attempt to build new electricity infrastructure in Ohio, only to face a fatal referendum after millions have already been spent on the approval process and construction? This burdensome regulation, coupled with the [oppressive, arbitrary wind turbine siting](#) setback law, will eliminate jobs that new wind projects can bring to rural communities.”

SB 234 will stunt economic growth and deny rural Ohioans badly-needed opportunities. Ohio needs to encourage, not discourage, renewable energy development. **Let’s not surrender that opportunity to grow our economy; let’s welcome new jobs to our state.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 234.