

**TESTIMONY OF  
THOMAS O'NEAL**

Champaign County

IN OPPOSITION TO Sub. H. B. 114

To revise the provisions governing renewable energy, energy efficiency, and peak demand reduction and to alter funding allocations under the Home Energy Assistance Program.

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Committee, I am here to speak against any revision of the setbacks for industrial wind turbines that would measure the distance from my home rather than my property line. I also object to any proposed reduction of the current 1,125-foot setback from property lines.

Accidents happen. According to the leading wind industry insurer, GCube, accidents happen more frequently than you think. In Risky Business, a GCube report issued in 2017, they noted: "Analysing the past five years of onshore wind mechanical breakdown claims, GCube has identified that the industry currently experiences 3,800 incidents of blade failure on average each year, each costing up to \$1 million to resolve, 1,200 incidents of gearbox failure, each costing between \$200,000 - \$300,000, and approximately 50 turbine fires, with an average claims cost of \$4.5 million."

And why would it be that the public doesn't know about this? Because the wind industry is largely unregulated and lacks standards for disclosure. Accidents happen. Accident sites are sealed off. There is very little public notice which inhibits informed, fact-based siting. What do you know about the blade accident that occurred in 2012 at Timber Road in Paulding County following a storm? What do you know about the blade failure at Hardin County's Hog Creek in April?

Regarding the Timber Road accident, the late Milo Schaffner, a Van Wert County, Hoaglin Township Trustee went to the site of the accident and measured 1 foot by 1-foot blade pieces that landed on a public road 1,561 feet from the turbine. He saw blade pieces in the yard of a family about 100 feet from their house. Trustee Schaffner testified to all of this under oath before the Ohio Power Siting Board.

The accident at Hog Creek happened this past April during a storm. I have included a picture of the turbine.



The wind industry keeps saying they have systems to prevent blade failure, but systems can fail for a variety of reasons. Accidents happen. The best safety system is a protective distance measured from the property line.