

TESTIMONY OF CARRIE APTHORPE

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.

My husband and I bought our family's home in 2012. We have about 13 acres and we paid more than a quarter of a million dollars for the home of our dreams. I raised Scottish Highlander cattle and so this property - that we only owned for five short years - seemed so perfect.

What we did not know when we purchased our home is that it would be surrounded by wind turbines to the north, east and south. No one disclosed this to us. I wonder how many recent homeowners and potential homebuyers across rural Ohio are in the dark too? How many are about to pay a quarter to a half a million for a home that may be next door to land leased for a wind turbine? Think about a 50-story tall industrial power plant that could sit 1.1 or 1.2 times the turbine height from their property line.

Do you think such a property could hold its value after the turbines are built? How many property owners will be applying to the County Auditor to have their property taxes reduced. I understand that 40% reductions are not uncommon in such cases if the home can be sold at all. What will be the consequences for the economic stability of our area if property taxes are reduced? What about the lack of transfer taxes when homes are not bought and cannot be sold?

The wind industry acts as if rural communities are of little value and blighting the land of non-participating neighbors is inconsequential. They think we weren't worth much too begin with. So why not require them to buy us out at fair market value rather than steal our property? Why not require a property-value guarantee? Why not give us a voice in our own destiny?

How do you think Scottish Highlander cattle would react to hours and hours of dizzying moving shadows trespassing on the property where they graze? How would they react to low frequency emissions that they could perceive even if I could not hear them?

The notion that 500 growing to 600 foot industrial turbines are appropriate in rural residential communities is crazy. Wind turbines belong in areas zoned M-2 for heavy manufacturing. You can't build a house in an area zoned M-2. Why is it right to build an industrial facility in a residential area?

These facilities should be prohibited in rural residential communities. If not that, then at least zone them a reasonable distance from the property line where their nuisance effects of moving shadows and noise do not intrude. A reasonable distance in a growing number of communities is between six to ten times the height of the turbine plus the blade length. Many communities are now also adopting noise standards of 40 decibels or lower at the property line.

The setback proposed in Sub. H.B. 114 is out of step with where the rest of the country is going. It should be defeated unless residents are given a voice in locally determining if and where wind turbines should be built.