

SENECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

◆ Michael J. Kerschner ◆

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Committee; my name is Mike Kerschner and I have been a commissioner in Seneca County, Ohio since January 2015. Wind Farm projects were not even a matter of discussion at that time. They have since become a very key issue for the citizens of my county.

The progression of my knowledge of these projects came early in my term when I was asked to sign a letter in support of the Alternative Energy Zone (AEZ) and the PILOT. I signed in support not realizing the reaction it would eventually evoke. The concerns began a few months ago as a few citizens in the proposed footprint of these projects began to call, write letters and occasionally come to one of our sessions. I listened and I read but still thought the projects made sense. I then attended several meetings culminating with a meeting in Attica that changed my perspective. Early on I hoped there was a path to a referendum so the people could decide—I advocated for that but it was not to be. After listening to this group and their desire to have someone represent them I began to realize they needed the voice of an elected official. The Seneca Anti-Wind Union then had a petition circulated and received more than 1000 signatures asking the commissioners to rescind the AEZ and the PILOT. I moved to rescind but the motion failed for lack of a second.

So, I believe the real question here is on whose testimony you should put the most weight. Should it be with the energy companies who will have a positive financial impact? Should it be the leaseholders who will have a positive financial impact? Should it be those in the footprint of the proposed project who have little, if any financial gain? I respectfully suggest to you that the heaviest weight should be given to those who will be most affected and least compensated.

There is no clear group, other than the energy companies and their PACs, who is promoting these projects. There is clear disagreement at the state level as many legislators have different positions on this matter. There is clear disagreement on the county level where we have a split vote as it relates to these projects. We have a number of elected officials at the county level who are opposed to these projects, we have a number of township trustees who are opposed to these projects and we have a number of school board members who are opposed to these projects. It is not a simple, clear cut acceptance as some might suggest.

Whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— whoosh— irritating to read, isn't it? Imagine this sound coming at random times, with no notice, penetrating your home and backyard. Please consider if this project was proposed for your neighborhood what your reaction might be.

People in the footprint of these proposed projects need to be heard and their testimony needs to be given a higher priority than others involved in this process. You have absolutely no allegiance to the alternative power companies or their representatives. You are there to represent the citizens of Ohio and as such I implore you to, at a minimum, retain the current property line setbacks and consider giving the people inside the footprint the opportunity to vote on what the proper distance should be.

Michael J. Kerschner
Seneca County Commissioners
111 Madison St, Tiffin, Ohio 44883

419.447.4550 Ext 105
419.934.0523 – Mobile