

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Courtney Heiser

June 18, 2019

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee:

My name is Courtney Heiser. I am an Agricultural Communications student at The Ohio State University as well as a resident of Seneca County. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony as an opponent to Ohio Substitute House Bill 6.

Coming from a rural area that has plans for wind project development, I understand the benefits of wind and other renewable energy projects. Also, coming from an agriculture background and farming family that owns several hundred acres of land across the county, the wind energy project has proposed to construct turbines on our land. Although we will not be able to farm a certain percentage of our acreage, the supplemental rent payments for the use of the land would be an additional benefit especially in these historic planting conditions and the continued trade war with China.

However, any attempt to block or discourage wind development as included in House Bill 6 will impact my family's desire to diversify our income.

Another consideration is that as a student in the College of Food, Ag, and Environmental Sciences at OSU, I had the opportunity to take a class on Rural Sociology. One of the most interesting topics we discussed was the [rural brain drain crisis](#) – a dilemma causing young adults to move from their rural hometowns to industrialized urban areas for better jobs and other opportunities.

One of the main goals for the Seneca Wind Project is to create value for Seneca County. This will help to aid in rural brain drain crisis. According to Alan Borst from USDA Rural Development, wind energy produces more jobs per watt than all other energy sources, including oil and coal. Specifically, for Seneca County, the wind project will provide \$56 million in PILOT revenues to be shared among schools, townships, the county and the state over the life of the project. Which again will give young people the incentive to remain residents in the rural area. Unfortunately, House Bill 6 will inhibit job or economic growth, not only in my area but also across the entire state of Ohio.

Currently, renewable energy accounts for **less than 3%** of power generation in Ohio. The goal of 12.5% generation could present real progress, however, with the implementation of HB 6, Ohio would be pawning off its responsibility to attract renewable energy investment and employment to other states.

HB 6 will impact every single person in the Buckeye State that uses electricity. HB 6 proposes to eliminate energy efficiency rebates that currently save Ohioans additional money on their monthly bills. Instead, HB 6 will implement a tax of \$2.50 for residential, commercial and industrial electricity users that will subsidize bankrupt energy company, First Energy, costing Ohioans \$312 million per year. In addition, if Ohio is not in compliance with the Clean Air Act, the state could lose federal highway funds, which is critical considering our infrastructure.

Specifically I request the following:

1. For the sake of my family farm and hundreds of other farm families who want to harvest the wind- Eliminate any language from House Bill 6 that weakens or presents roadblocks for wind development such as the burdensome, local-township voting provision
2. Based on the success of safe wind farm development in Ohio, restore reasonable wind-siting regulations so that developers are not hindered by the current, over-restrictive setbacks.
3. To encourage commercial scale wind and solar development, retain the already-modest Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and maintain the current Energy Efficiency Resource Standard.

It's time for Ohio to take the lead in renewable energy investment and not lose these opportunities to other states. I ask that you set Ohio on a clear path of winning in renewables by not supporting House Bill 6.

I appreciate your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
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