



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Chairman Steve Wilson  
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6  
Testimony of Susan Munroe  
Director of Economic Growth and Engagement, Chambers for Innovation & Clean Energy

June 18, 2019

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

My name is Susan Munroe and I am past President and CEO of the Van Wert Area Chamber of Commerce and now Director of Economic Growth and Engagement for Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony as an opponent to Ohio Substitute House Bill 6.

The Norwalk Reflector covered a meeting this past Spring about a possible wind farm project in Huron County. Laborers' District Council of Ohio representative Mike Engbert had this to say about the impact of wind development on job creation, "construction workers, especially unions, don't view it as "temporary work. These jobs are going to very beneficial for the community. This is just one spoke in a wheel of a career.

"These are the kind of jobs that get kids through college, pay off mortgage payments on homes, provide a living for a family and put food on the table. I can't overemphasize this enough because those middle-class wages are kind of dying out," he concluded.

The Reflector went on to report that Rich Jordan, with Iron Workers Union 77 agreed, stating, "The best thing about this is after the wind mills are built and done, these kids will have a career," Jordan said. "They can have a career they can do 35 to 45 years, making plenty of money."

Those jobs and that investment were exactly what Van Wert County experienced in 2010 and 2011 when Blue Creek Wind Farm was constructed- representing a \$25,000 million impact to our economy during the 2 year construction period.

Now, most every day in Van Wert County I see the wind turbines from Blue Creek Wind Farm spin, harvesting clean renewable energy. But that's mostly all I see right now generating income for our farmers with this year's planting season's relentless rains. This drought and flood proof "cash crop" delivers \$5,000,000 every year in new tax revenue to Van Wert County and payments to schools, community organizations, income to landowners and local supply chain businesses while supporting county organizations such as 4-H and the Brumback Library. **Blue Creek Wind Farm is the single largest taxpayer in our county, larger than the next eleven**

**businesses combined.** And now, we hope to soon experience the promise of solar farm development.

**Renewable energy projects like Blue Creek, are the greatest opportunity for economic growth in many rural, courthouse communities in Ohio, generating new tax revenues and new jobs.**

Those new jobs combined with other clean energy positions including energy efficiency and supply chain manufacturing have delivered more than 112,000 jobs to our state. Additionally, access to renewable energy is often a top site selection priority for Fortune 100 and 500 companies.

For these reasons, I request the following:

Eliminate any language from House Bill 6 that weakens or presents barriers to renewable energy development, such as the burdensome, local-township voting referendum. This only presents roadblocks to new economic investment and new tax revenues by creating overly-restrictive, hurdles that no other development has to endure at the local level.

Additionally, 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.

And then finally, retain the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) and oppose any attempt to weaken them.

**Ohio chambers of commerce, economic development offices and community stakeholders work very hard to attract employers and investment to our communities, and we must not lose points in site selectors' evaluations nor the opportunity to produce and sell clean, renewable power. Nor lose out on new job growth that renewable energy projects deliver**

International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 18 had this to say about Ohio wind development, "We look forward to all of these proposed wind farm projects being approved and creating hundreds of jobs for our members. We look forward to the ribbon cutting ceremonies." Concluding with, "#UnionStrong, #UnionMadeGreenEnergy."

It's time for Ohio to take the lead in attracting renewable energy investment and employment—and not surrender that role to neighboring states. And let's make sure our chambers of commerce get to use those over-sized scissors to officially cut the ribbon at their county's new wind or solar farms.

I appreciate your consideration and I would be happy to answer questions.

Respectfully,

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