



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Tom Bullock
Ohio Representative, Chambers for Innovation and 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 Tom Bullock, and I speak today as Ohio Representative for the Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an opponent to Substitute House Bill 6.

Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy (CICE) is a nationwide network of local chambers from every state in the nation. We help local chambers of commerce and their member companies navigate and prosper in the clean energy space. Founded by local chamber executives, CICE's Advisory Council is comprised of chamber CEOs and senior staff. We are one of the largest local chamber organizations in the country, with 1,200 chambers in our network representing some 900,000 businesses. In Ohio, we have nearly 300 chambers representing more than 70,000 businesses.

I bring to you today a letter, attached to my testimony and cosigned by eleven chamber leaders, economic development officials, and community stakeholders, requesting your strong support of clean, renewable energy development as our state considers any energy policy. The letter states:

“As chambers, economic development officials, and community leaders, we have seen or anticipate significant benefits from renewable clean energy projects to our businesses, schools, communities, and the economy of this great state. We have also seen how energy efficiency improvements to buildings and facilities have saved funds and made businesses more competitive.”

These benefits are quite significant indeed: Renewable energy projects such as wind (and, increasingly, solar) are the greatest opportunity for economic growth in many rural Ohio, courthouse communities. For several of our member chambers, there is no greater investment for their local economies than wind farm development. Wind farms are the number one source of tax revenue in Paulding and Van Wert Counties, providing impressive new tax revenue for schools, new income for area landowners, and new revenues for local businesses who supply goods and services to the wind energy companies. In addition, wind has brought jobs: both temporary jobs during construction and permanent technician jobs filled by highly-paid, highly-trained staff.

Wind and solar jobs combined with other clean energy positions, such as energy efficiency and supply chain manufacturing, have delivered more than 112,000 jobs to our state. Still more economic activity derives from attracting national corporations' facilities to Ohio, such as data and fulfillment centers: access to renewable energy is frequently a top site selection priority for Fortune 500 companies. Ohio must compete for—and win—those jobs in today's knowledge-driven economy. Ohio chambers of commerce, economic development offices and community stakeholders work very hard to attract employers and investment, and we must not lose points in site selectors' evaluations due to inadequate supplies of in-state clean power generation.

It's worth underscoring, as the legislature works to keep taxes low in Ohio, that renewable energy development brings growth that contributes in a very big way to the tax base and local schools. As the Toledo Blade reported last month, wind revenues bring “stability to local schools in uncertain times”—without raising taxes:

■ “At Paulding County’s Wayne Trace Local School District, a higher percentage of students have been graduating and more have scored in advanced and accelerated categories for achievement since revenue from wind farms began coming in, according to state test scores. Superintendent Ben Winans said there has been \$4.5 million in turbine revenue since 2014, which has allowed the district to hire 18 additional staffers — mostly for special needs and intervention. Some \$848,235 came in the last fiscal year. **‘We wouldn’t be able to do this without them,’** Mr. Winans said of the giant turbines.”

■ “At Van Wert County’s Crestview Local Schools, wind turbines have generated an additional \$880,000 a year, which has paid for new classrooms and other construction, as well as a school resource officer, and money for future contingencies. **‘It keeps you off the ballot. You can carry that money forward,’** Superintendent Kathy Mollenkopf said. **‘We don’t have to go to our taxpayers for anything. That’s a good place to be.’”**

■ “At Van Wert County’s Lincolnview Local Schools, turbines have generated \$2 million since 2014, and — at a pace of \$400,000 a year — are expected to bring \$8 million in funding over 20 years. It has helped pay for new technology, a boiler, more parking, and a new roof. **‘Where we decide to put it is endless,’** Mr. Snyder said, also **stating that the additional money helped refinance bonds to save interest on the community center,** which will also serve as a tornado shelter.”

What school district has no need to go to district residents for new taxes? It's unheard of, and a real testament to the massive economic growth opportunity represented by renewable energy development. In fact, these projects achieve higher-than-normal upside since they create new tax revenues with no infrastructure costs that must be paid for by county government.

Regarding energy efficiency, Ohio’s Energy Efficiency Resource Standard is an effective, cost-saving program that should not be dismantled: it has saved Ohioans \$2.65 for every \$1.00 invested. Under the fee structure proposed in H.B.6, residential customers would see their bills go up by a net of \$6.11 per month since customers would lose energy usage reductions, avoided cost in new transmission and distribution, and reduced need for expensive peak power

generation. Business customers frequently have multiple meters and would face increased charges on each of them, making the proposed costs many times more expensive.

For these reasons, we believe there is a need to retain, not dismantle, standards that have successfully provided long-term, market-based investment signals. In addition, the state should remove roadblocks and cumbersome development regulations that stand in the way of projects: namely, the highest-in-the-Midwest, development-chilling wind setback regulations put in place in 2014. Together, these would create a clear and consistent roadmap to encourage renewable energy development.

We therefore urge that as part of any actions you take regarding energy policy, you:

1. retain the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) and oppose any attempt to weaken them; and
2. restore reasonable wind siting standards that will encourage companies to continue to develop wind projects that will benefit our local communities.

I appreciate your consideration, and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Attachment: Chamber-ED-Schools-County HB 6 Letter

May 8, 2019

Dear Governor DeWine, Senate President Obhof, and Speaker Householder:

Local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations are at the forefront of advocating for the economic growth of our communities, and in the era of cost-competitive, global competition, we recognize that energy is an increasingly important issue for our local businesses.

As chambers, economic development officials, and community leaders, we have seen or anticipate significant benefits from renewable clean energy projects to our businesses, schools, communities, and the economy of this great state. We have also seen how energy efficiency improvements to building and facilities have saved funds and made businesses more competitive.

For future growth, **Ohio needs to take full advantage of this fast-growing sector that's delivered more than 112,000 new jobs and billions in investment** to our state. Additionally, access to renewable energy is often a top site selection priority for Fortune 100 and 500 companies.

With this in mind, we believe there is a need for a clear and consistent roadmap on this issue to **encourage renewable clean energy development, not roadblocks or burdensome development regulations.**

That is why we encourage you, as part of any actions you take regarding energy policy, to (1) **retain the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)** and oppose any attempt to weaken them; and (2) **restore reasonable wind siting regulations that will allow companies to develop wind projects that will benefit our local communities.**

Let's work together to help the Buckeye State continue to lead in attracting renewable energy investment and employment—and not surrender that role to neighboring states.

Respectfully,

Mikayla Pieper
Executive Director, Paulding Chamber of Commerce

Jed Metzger
President & CEO, Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce

Shirley Dyer
Executive Director, Greater Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce

Nathan Strum
Director of Economic Development, Licking County Chamber of Commerce,
Executive Director, Grow Licking County

Matt Gilroy
Executive Director, Fulton County Economic Development Corporation

Jeff Snyder
Superintendent, Lincolnview Local Schools

Rick Turner
Superintendent, Vantage Career Center

Benjamin A. Winans
Superintendent, Wayne Trace School Local District

Dr. Martin Miller
Superintendent, Antwerp Local Schools

Ken Amstutz
Superintendent, Paulding Exempted Village Schools

Holly Stacy
Commissioner, Seneca County

