



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman Steve Wilson
Opponent Testimony on Substitute House Bill 6
Testimony of Mikayla Pieper
Executive Director, Paulding Chamber of Commerce

June 19, 2019

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

My name is Mikayla Pieper and I am the Executive Director for the Paulding Chamber of Commerce in northwest Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today as an opponent to Ohio Substitute House Bill 6.

The Paulding Chamber is dedicated to the economic health and vitality of Paulding County and the entire northwest Ohio region. We are committed to working with the business community, educators, and government to establish the best possible business environment.

No greater investment than wind farm development has provided economic growth for our county. Wind farms are our #1 source of tax revenue in Paulding County providing an impressive new tax revenue for our 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 hundreds of new, temporary jobs during the construction phase as well as permanent wind farm jobs with highly-paid, highly-trained staff. Wind development directly affects Chamber members large and small who supply goods and services to each new development. Because of these benefits, **wind farm development has been the #1 opportunity for economic growth in Paulding County as well as other counties in Ohio with wind farms.**

For these reasons, I request you eliminate any language from House Bill 6 that restricts, disqualifies or in any way presents roadblocks or weakens renewable energy development, renewable energy standards or energy efficiency.

Furthermore, based on the success of wind farm development in Paulding County, I ask you to consider no new energy bill without including the restoration of wind siting regulations so that developers are not being hindered by the current, unreasonable setbacks. Less turbines can be built with the current setbacks which restricts revenue that provides vital opportunities for our county, our children, and our economic growth.

Additionally, the bill should eliminate any wind project local vote provision as this is a clear over-reach and government-imposed barrier to block wind farm development. As Sarah E. Hunt is CEO of the Joseph Rainey Center for Public Policy recently shared: “What smart, innovative company will attempt to build new electricity infrastructure in Ohio, only to face a fatal referendum after millions have already been spent on the approval process and construction? This burdensome regulation, coupled with the oppressive, arbitrary wind turbine siting setback law, will eliminate jobs that new wind projects can bring to rural communities.” To some killing wind may be the goal, to others, I caution you on the danger this brings to new development and investments in Ohio.

The long-term consequences of House Bill 6 as is will stunt economic and job growth in my county and in the Buckeye state. Ohio needs to encourage, not discourage renewable energy development, especially as access to renewable energy is often a top site selection priority for Fortune 100 and 500 companies. Paulding County a population of 18,845 has secure investments from Amazon, Microsoft, and General Motors whom all have pledged to become 100% renewable.

Let’s not surrender that opportunity to grow our economy, give more opportunities to our residents, and to welcome new jobs to neighboring states.

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

Mikayla Pieper
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