

Testimony of Christopher Zeman  
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
HB 6  
June 19, 2019

Good afternoon, Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee. My name is Christopher Zeman and I am a resident of Republic, OH which is located in Seneca County. I have been a resident since 2009 and I am speaking to you today on behalf of myself along with other residents of Seneca County who could not provide testimony before you today.

What an irony that I live in Republic. A Republic is defined as a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives. Our Founding Fathers created our national Republic on the principle that EVERYONE would be given a voice in our government. In fact, the people *are* the government and those leaders who are elected by the people are *required to be the voice* of the people. Unfortunately, the experience in Seneca County's Republic has proven otherwise. Today, large corporations and unelected bureaucrats seem to be the voice rather than the people.

I am reminded of a time when the Railroad Barons of the late 1800's took land in order to build their transcontinental railroads. This year is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Golden Spike Ceremony at Promontory Summit in Utah and I feel like history is repeating itself here today with the expansion of the wind industry.

I will tell you that there is quite a bit of similarities with our struggle to gain a voice in the construction of large scale wind projects in our area and the large hand of the wind companies themselves pushing down on any opposition that comes their way. The one question is, why is this opposition even there? I think all of you should be asking yourselves this. There is a plethora of reasons why, however one reason is the wind industry's way of "doing business" - much like the way of the Railroad Barons of the 1800's.

Quick talk and deals out of view of the public. Enticing unsuspecting and elderly citizens to sign on to one-sided contracts they don't understand and promoting the false notion that all the neighbors have signed on to easement agreements waiving property rights so you better 'get on board', too. Unfortunately, by the time the "general public" does find out anything it is almost too late and here we are year after year fighting this continuing barrage of wind development.

Every day of the year someone is fighting back, every day of the year someone has stopped their lives to protect their rural communities from "Big Wind", every day of the year someone's child is missing time with their mom or dad because their parent feels that the right to protect "what is theirs" will ultimately affect their children, thus justifying the sacrifice.

Here we are today, for the third year in a row, powerless to protect our family, home, property, and community. You can give us a say in whether or not we want a wind project in our community. I'm certain that leveling the playing field would change the character of the dialog locally. Industrial development of this nature should not be the exclusive decision of State Government – what happened to home rule? These wind developments are not public utilities – they are private for profit limited liability companies whose business model is to tie up some land, obtain a certificate from the Ohio Power Siting Board, secure federal subsidies and flip it to a new owner.

The people are asking you to restore their voice and bargaining power through the referendum provided in HB6.