

Ohio Senate Committee on Energy and Public Utilities

Sub. HB 6

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

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Bellevue, Ohio
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Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee, I am here to provide support for Sub. House Bill 6 and would specifically like to address the critically important “Reineke Referendum” as we call it. This provision will give impacted communities a voice in the development of wind projects.

I am the 6th generation of my family to be born and raised in Groton Township/Erie County, just outside the Bellevue city limits. Because of my lifelong commitment and personal knowledge of my rural community, along with my neighboring family and friends, we believe we are the ones who can accurately assess the cumulative impact of Industrial Wind Turbine projects within our area, and determine whether or not the risks outweigh the “proposed” benefits.

The City of Bellevue is the perfect example of why the Reineke Referendum should be approved. Bellevue is unique because it is situated in the corners of 4 different counties- Erie, Huron, Seneca, and Sandusky. Within these 4 counties alone, there are 4 pending Industrial Wind Turbine projects, with 3 more waiting in the shadows, not yet submitted. As you see from Attachment A, the city of Bellevue will literally be surrounded by hundreds of turbines up to 655 feet tall.

Bellevue and the surrounding 4 counties mentioned, also sit atop the largest sinkhole region in the state of Ohio. Karst, a geological phenomenon that is known for its sinkholes, caves, disappearing streams, and natural springs, occurs throughout five different areas of the state, but according to extensive studies carried out by the ODNR Division of Geological Survey, the “Bellevue/Castalia Karst Region” is the most highly developed of them all, with more than 1,000 verified sinkholes, and more occurring in the present day.

The Ohio EPA has designated the Bellevue/Castalia Karst Region as part of the “Drinking Water Source Protection Area”. The EPA warns that these areas are “high susceptibility to contamination and water quality impacts.” This EPA Map also coincides, alarmingly, with the areas that three of the Industrial Wind Turbine projects (Republic, Seneca, and Emerson Creek) are slated for.

I could easily go on, and share with you the many risks associated with erecting hundreds of 600+ foot turbines into highly vulnerable, unpredictable karst bedrock, but that is not my point today. I simply wanted to give you one clear example that illustrates how important it is that the citizens- who actually live in the areas of proposed wind projects- who have the true knowledge, ability, and right to assess the costs vs. benefits of such projects- should be allowed a voice in this entire process.

We could never expect our state legislators, or the Ohio Power Siting Board, to have such intimate knowledge of every community that has been proposed to site a wind project. The OPSB is given a set of siting criteria, and that is what they must follow. They do not have the authority to look at the cumulative effect of multiple projects in an area. The OPSB is mandated to look at each project individually and they

cannot deny a permit to a developer who meets their siting criteria. Nothing can stop a project that follows the rules, even if the rules are not protective.

Wind Energy Representatives have testified that they believe local citizens do have a voice in the procedure by way of approving or denying a PILOT (Payment in Lie of Taxation). This is simply not true.

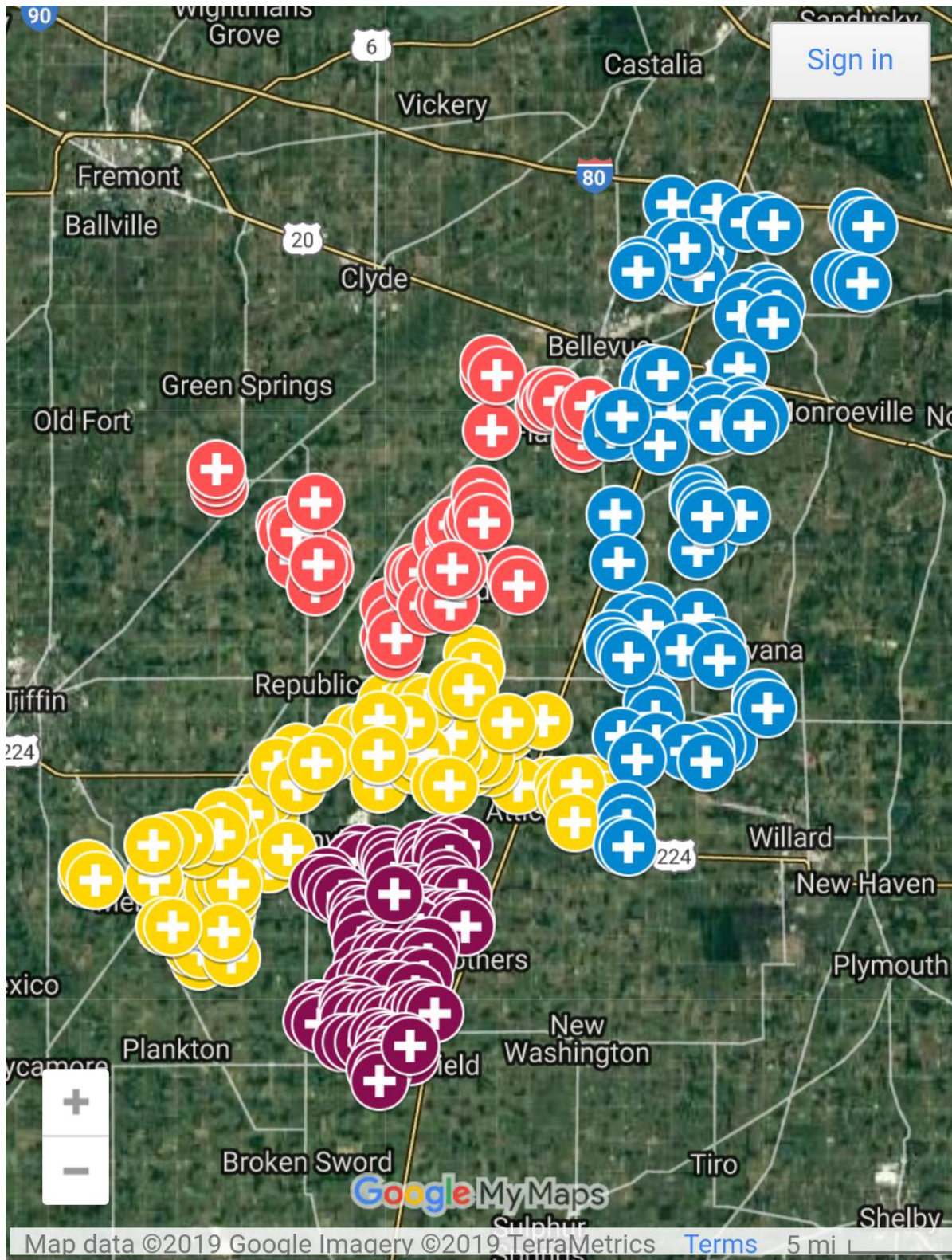
Both Erie and Huron County Commissioners unanimously denied a PILOT for the Emerson Creek Wind Project. Both County Commissioner bodies declared at their public meeting that they did not believe the wind project would benefit either Erie or Huron County. Apex representatives were quick to respond by stating, "The project will go on with or without the PILOT." They also told us, our township trustees, and county commissioners, at several different meetings, that "The OPSB is the only agency that can approve or deny a wind project," and that, "A PILOT does not determine the approval/denial of a project, it only determines how a county will get its money."

In most areas of the US, local zoning or control determines where industrial wind turbine projects are developed. Wind projects are massive, industrial sprawls that cover tens of thousands of acres of otherwise productive cropland and hundreds of square miles of beautiful, rural residential communities who are denied the right to zoning. HB 6 and the Reineke Referendum will restore "home rule" to these communities by giving local citizens a voice and a vote.

Please support Ohio's rural communities by supporting HB6.

Respectfully,

Krista Beck



ATTACHMENT A