

**Substitute House Bill 6 Proponent Party Testimony**  
**Brenda DeLong, Van Wert County, Ohio**  
**June 19, 2019**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee. Thank you for your time today.

My name is Brenda DeLong and I am a resident and property owner in Van Wert County in the Blue Creek wind footprint. I do not have property with turbines, but turbines directly affect me by disrupting my life on an almost daily basis.

When the turbines were placed in our community there was no real opportunity to have a meaningful voice or a vote. I think, in hindsight, it would have been advantageous if the community could have really understood and weighed the costs and benefits of industrial uses placed in rural residential communities. But they say hindsight is 20-20. I would like to share two examples of concern for rural residential people faced with the imposition of an industrial use.

The Blue Creek developer is required to maintain noise levels at 5 decibels above background for a distance of one mile from the turbines. The key was the starting number at the time of certificate approval. Studies done by the developer indicated a range of background threshold levels across the footprint from 29 to 55 dBA. 5 decibels above 29 is 34 dBA. Notwithstanding, the developer sought and received approval from the OPSB to use 43.6 decibels as the threshold and they did so without requiring a public hearing. Acoustic experts agree that more than a 5 decibel increase causes annoyance and a 10 decibel increase would cause extreme annoyance.

So what has been my experience? The noise can be heard inside my home with windows closed and with a TV or radio playing. Let me state, I am accustomed to noise, I grew up on a major highway, lived ½ mile from another highway, lived ½ mile from a railroad, lived on a road that dump trucks traveled on daily, and I was a schoolteacher.

I built my home on my parents' farmland in 2004, expecting to live in a peaceful country setting. That all changed when turbines were built around my home but the noise of turbines makes it unbearable on many days. Two years ago, a turbine had a whining siren sound that was not fixed for approximately 6 months, I had to leave my home on several occasions because the noise was terrible.

Would the community support a new wind development with similar noise levels? I doubt it and I am certain the developer would work to reduce noise emissions through technological means or curtailment if they knew an affirmative vote from the community was required to go forward. There would likely also be a more responsive complaint resolution process.

Another concern of residential folks is when turbines should be shut down when severe weather strikes. Our area was placed under a tornado watch on Memorial Day. As our local fire departments were called out for spotters, the turbines continued to turn. We have been told that turbines can be automatically shut off based on sensors in the turbine themselves, and they can be manually shut down from an operations control center. That being said, last summer, a turbine near my home was struck by lightning which caused damage to one of the blades. This event occurred between 9-10 am. However, the turbine continued to spin until fragments began being thrown from the damaged blade in between 2-3pm.

At the very least, this damaged turbine spun for 4 hours before it was shut down. I can only conclude that these safety systems must have failed or it was overlooked by their operations center. If things like this occur in a lightning event what concern should the public have during weather warnings like we had Memorial Day? Our local EMA director was notified and indicated he had no authority in the matter. Law enforcement was also contacted and the dispatcher asked several times what the concern was. The concern is these things coming apart and damaging surrounding properties or heaven forbid injuring someone.

The next time a wind project is proposed for Van Wert County, we will have the benefit of hindsight and our real experience. If we also have the right to vote on a project, we believe the developer will be more attentive to our concerns. Blue Creek operators might try to respond to weather-related incidents in a more timely manner. The community will have more leverage to deal with problems like excessive noise.

If you think about it, any industrial facility that violates a zoning requirement faces consequences from local enforcement authorities. Wind developers have no accountability to anyone. I think this is a big part of the growing anxiety in rural NW Ohio. You can be a leaseholder or a big supporter of wind development and still benefit by a more collaborative and accountable process.

I urge you to support the referendum provisions of HB6 and to act now because everyone would benefit.

Thank you for your time.