

Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

Sub. House Bill 6

Proponent Testimony

Anthony W. West and J. Dian West

Tiffin, Ohio 44883

June 19, 2019

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams, Members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee, we write to ask that you support House Bill 6 and the provision added by Representative Reineke known as the "Reineke Referendum".

We are lifelong residents of Seneca County, Ohio. We were both raised, attended school, live and now work in Seneca County. We built our dream home, raised our family, and plan to retire in Seneca County. Like countless others, we would have never imagined we would be required to spend countless hours of our time and untold amounts of our hard earned savings to work and defend our home and community against the actions of outside corporations and special interest groups. We join with our neighbors and countless others around the State of Ohio to ask for your help in correcting the egregious omission with regards to the lack of local control in the review and approval process of industrial wind turbine projects.

We were left unaware of the developing industrial wind project for our area (Republic Wind, LLC; Case Number: 17-2295-EL-BGN) until after the formal public announcement on November 11, 2017. We quickly learned all the details of the project as it was released by the wind developer and the implications of the project. Like so many others, we became disgruntled at the notion that those we elected to represent us would allow such a project to come to our region and remain silent. We helped gather more than three thousand signatures of local residents and submitted a petition to our County Commissioners, only to be met with the county's "official" 2:1 support of the projects. The impartiality and reasoning for the County Commissioner's position is certainly now in question since at least one Commissioner has personal familial benefit in one of the wind projects. We sadly discovered that the lack of input and control via our local elected officials, the only remaining recourse outlined by the Ohio Power Siting Board was to intervene. The current process, by flawed design, consequently ends repeatedly in a legal battle between the various parties and often before the Ohio Supreme Court. We joined that intervention process, only to then be dismissed at the demands of the wind project developer since our property was "not located within the project area and (did) not abut the project area" and therefore we did not "have a direct interest in the outcome of this case."¹

An industrial wind project dramatically changes the area in which it is constructed. A growing list of issues with the proposed projects continues to lengthen. Our local elected officials selectively pick out the "positive" potential attributes of these projects and ignore any raised negative impacts. Meanwhile, we as citizens did not ask for this in our community. We were not involved in the nearly decade-long conversation about the wind projects like some leaseholders (or anyone else that would financially benefit). We were not aware of the need to ask our local

officials their stance on the wind projects prior to electing them (since we did not even know such a project was planned). We were not been permitted to intervene thanks to the wind project developer. We now have no local representation or process with which to address our concerns. We have been rendered voiceless in the entire ordeal! Yet our property is in one of the affected townships and less than a quarter mile from the project boundary. It is infuriating to think of the numerous absentee landowners in just this project's boundary that stand to financially benefit from the project yet do not live, work, or raise families in the affected area and will never face the day-to-day implications of living amongst more than 200 turbines at 650 feet in height.

The Reineke Referendum is an overdue and much needed addition to the current application process of industrial wind turbine projects in the State of Ohio. It is important for every citizen affected to be involved in the process. The referendum serves as an option for those most impacted to judge the costs and benefits of a proposed project for their community. It is more palatable to know that everyone affected can have a voice via a vote in the process and not just those that stand to financially benefit. Please give us that voice in the process and support the Reineke Referendum.

Anthony W. West
J. Dian West

1. <http://dis.puc.state.oh.us/TiffToPDf/A1001001A18I04B41758I00072.pdf>