

Substitute House Bill 6
Proponent Party Testimony
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Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written Proponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 6. I appreciate your time.

I am writing to voice my support for HB 6 and the Reineke Referendum. I currently live in Hardin County, Ohio where the Scioto Ridge Industrial Wind Complex recently broke ground. My family resides in the footprint of the project. We do not host any wind turbines, but we were approached about it and declined.

HB 6 and the Reineke Referendum will give those of us living in proposed wind developments the opportunity to have local control, something that none of us currently have. When the Scioto Ridge project was developed, Hardin County was designated an Alternative Energy Zone (AEZ), which meant the PILOT (Payment in lieu of Taxes) was granted without being asked for.

A county with an AEZ has an appearance of local control resting in the hands of three elected officials, some of whom may have contracts with the wind developer. This is not local control; this is special interest control. This is also the case with township trustees – they live in the project and have contracts with the wind companies. Special interest control again, not fair representation of all citizens.

Hardin County has since repealed their AEZ and will grant PILOTs on a case by case basis going forward. According to AWEA lobbyist Dayna Baird Payne, the PILOT is local control because if it is denied, that means wind will not be developed in that community. In Logan County, OH, also in the footprint of the Scioto Ridge Project, the county commissioners denied a PILOT and still, at the groundbreaking this last week, the developer touted turbines being built in Logan County. The PILOT did NOT stop construction in Logan County. In addition, Richland Township in Logan County, adopted a resolution against the construction of wind turbines in their township and yet, they are still being built.

There is no local control without residents having a vote. This is where we make our home and pay taxes. This is where we create a community, attend church and look after our neighbors. This is where we had hoped our grown children would choose to live.

I have been to the Statehouse and have spoken to several of you on various occasions about wind turbine siting and fighting for local control. On one occasion while speaking I was questioned by Senator Eklund. He asked me if I believed that the State of Ohio would take care of me (regarding wind turbine issues). After a few moments of thought I said no, I did not believe that the State of Ohio would take care of me.

Who will take care of us? Our Trustees in both McDonald and Taylor Creek Townships adopted Resolutions in opposition to the development of the Scioto Ridge wind project. They thought by filing their Resolutions with the Ohio Power Siting Board, they would – as our elected officials – take care of us – their constituents. It was meaningless.

As it stands today, no one at the state, county or township level can stay the hand of a foreign company who has a disproportionate supply of financial and technical resources and who wants to have their way in our community. There is no equity in this arrangement. The bar is so low in Ohio that, despite having marginal wind resources, a wind developer can come here, save money on transmission, collect a bunch of subsidies, trample on the community and local elected officials and forever alter the character of the community while turning a profit.

The right of referendum will restore a measure of equity in this environment. It belongs in HB 6 and it is long overdue.