

**Testimony of Jim Feasel**  
**Seneca County, Ohio**  
**Interested Party - HB 6**  
**June 27, 2019**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, ranking member Williams, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak as a interested party on HB-6 and specifically to the opportunity for a referendum on new wind projects in affected townships that has tentatively been removed from the bill. I speak to you today as a substantial landowner inside a proposed wind project in Seneca County.

At the state level, over the past many years, the wind industry has come before the Ohio Legislature requesting favors. Like renewable energy credits, special tax treatment, special zoning treatment, mandated markets for their production, etc.. They claim they deserve this special treatment because they are saving the climate, creating jobs, investing in communities, and are all around great and deserving folks. Except for requiring developers to place the turbines a bit farther back from neighbors, Ohio has been very generous to wind over the years, and that has kept them reporting back to you on their progress and recommending more things you can do for them. And that's all well and good.

But, on the local level, we citizens see the wind industry using a different approach. Tactics used by land agents to secure leases from trusting landowners are many times unscrupulous to say the least. Misrepresentation runs rampant. Intimidation is the order of the day. And I am not exaggerating.

In my county, the developer is putting 3 600' turbines directly in the IFR approach to our County airport that we have \$15 million invested in. The airport manager (a lifelong professional pilot) says this will substantially degrade the usefulness of the airport. The same developer is putting more than a dozen 600' tall turbines within a mile and a half of our brand new K-12 school, one of the biggest and newest schools in the county. One of these turbines is so close that there are documented blades throws over at the OPSB that would have landed right in the middle of the soccer field if it happened to that turbine.

If the opportunity of a possible referendum existed for the project there is no doubt the developer would be working with us on these issues. As it is, they have the power of the state behind them, and they refuse to make any changes to their plans. Senators, the current policy of siting wind projects is NOT working for the citizens of Ohio, and it is turning public opinion rapidly against wind energy. You may not see it from your committee chairs, but I assure you, it is happening. And it is not good for anyone in Ohio, including the wind companies.

As it is local citizens have no control over the huge transformation that is about to take place in their community. The control has been usurped by the State and given to the wind developer. The local control we were suppose to have in approving or withholding a tax break for a project (PILOT) has proven to be no control at all, as projects proceed no matter which way county officials decide on that issue.

Even landowners who want to cooperate have no real control, they simply sign the lease, and hope that the wind company locates the turbines in a way that they can both benefit from and live with. But, when the plans are made public, many times that does not work out well for them. Again, if they have issues, the developer has no motivation to work with them under current policy.

Civilized people have developed ways to diffuse such situations. And that is by assuring everyone in the community has a equal say in such matters. That is what the opportunity for a local referendum on wind projects does. And by "equal say" we do not mean holding "public hearings" and pretending to listen before steam rolling forward. And we do not mean a process that requires piles of money, legions of lawyers, and time spent in courtrooms. In this country "equal say" is taken to mean a VOTE.

Over the last many years, the honorable people here at Ohio's Capitol have listened to the wind companies and given them a great many things. But now, we the local citizens come before you. Not to beg for money, or special treatment, but to request that you return that which you have taken from us - the right to have a say in what happens in our own communities. I fear that, until this happens, strife will continue to build across Ohio regarding wind projects.

Benefits to Ohio's economy, to the climate, to the wind companies, and to areas that would welcome wind projects, will all be precluded by the current policy of force against local citizens. No business or political strategy survives for long if the people do not support it. Wind energy is fast losing that support, but can regain it easily, by agreeing to cooperate and abide by a community's decision. If one company is unsuccessful with their approach and gets voted out, another company would be free to come in and get it right.

Now that the narrative about local referendums has begun the subject is not going to go away until the issue is addressed. Wind companies will have to find a way to incorporate it into their business plan. The sooner they do the better for their bottom line and for the people of Ohio.

Wind projects are much too big and affect far too many people for them to be built without area input. Ultimately, more wind projects will be built in Ohio with the spirit of cooperation that a referendum would ensure, than under the veil of conflict that current policy guarantees.

Thank you Senators for your attention.