

PROPONENT TESTIMONY
Gene and Vickie Pool
Van Wert County
Proponent HB 118
House Public Utilities Committee
March 9, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Committee. I am writing to urge your support of House Bill 118.

As you know, this bill supports local input and setback distances, and, in short, **they seek to empower local citizens to determine what is best for them and their local communities.**

This bill is NOT about opposition to wind turbines; rather it is about equity and safety. If the state of Ohio is going to promote wind energy, it has a moral and governmental responsibility to ensure that progress is carried out in the safest way possible. When a wind farm is introduced into a small, local community, much is at stake: property values and safety being two of the largest concerns.

Developers should be compelled to be more open with information, ensuring that neighbors of wind farms are invited into the process from the beginning, rather than being shut out until all decisions have been made for them. This is NOT how a fair, equitable and democratic government is supposed to work. In my own community, I learned of the wind project only after all deals were complete, and this meant that I lost all power to ensure my own safety or my own well-being. **Leaving local citizens powerless over their own welfare is certainly not a move-forward way of governance, and it's an approach that continues to threaten and leave behind the most vulnerable populations of our state.**

How is it that a state agency (the Ohio Power Siting Board), along with the populace and their governing agents from the larger Ohio cities are able to have input into what happens in our local community? **This seems to show that Ohio isn't against local input – unless that input is coming from populations who actually live beneath these wind farms.** This feels eerily similar to tactics used by energy and power companies throughout history – tactics, by the way, that peer reviewed research has consistently proven as oppressive and damaging to the long-term welfare of communities.

House Bill 118 is simply asking that you protect the local communities that remain the lifeblood to the State of Ohio. This is a bill that seeks to empower communities to make decisions in a holistic manner, and **it is our urgent request that you support it.**

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