

Proponent Testimony – SB 52
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Jane Marshall
Preble County
March 9, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee, I write this testimony today in support of SB 52 that allows for a local referendum for large renewables like Solar and Wind.

I am a farmer, former commissioner, and advocate from Preble County. Having a group like the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) dictating land use by allowing untold acres of solar panels or wind turbines in a local jurisdiction is unacceptable. It is my understanding that SB 57 allows for a local referendum for these situations. I am a strong proponent of this legislation.

The OPSB, I believe, was originally designed to make sure that the infrastructure for electric in Ohio was suitable to be able to deliver power where it was needed. They were looking at the big picture like where to put a power plant, a substation or transmission lines. While these do impact land use, the impact is very small. It is for the greater good.

Solar and Wind do not meet the same criteria as traditional electric described above. In Preble County there are nearly 3000 acres of solar panels proposed. 3000 acres is a gigantic change in land use that should be handled locally in a way similar to zoning changes, which are also changes in land use.

Also, part of this 3000-acre proposal in Preble County is a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) proposal that will make these 3000 acres tax exempt for 40 years if this project moves forward. While the developer (or someone) plans to pay for what the taxes would be that remains to be seen and as a landowner in Preble County, who pays enough tax already, I am not willing to bet on the success of the PILOT.

There is an old adage that the best form of government is the most local. I fully agree with that. SB 52 is local government driven. It puts the ultimate land use decision in local hands and it allows the locals, who pay tax, to determine if they are willing to make something tax exempt by approving the project.

I have heard rumblings of some larger grass roots groups being opposed to SB 52. Shame on them! Grass roots implies bottom-up rather than top-down. The OPSB is very much top-down. SB 52 is very much bottom-up therefore having a grass roots approach.

I ask that you pass SB 52 in a positive manner out of committee. I am available for questions by phone at 937-336-1456.

Sincerely,
Jane Marshall

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