

Written Testimony of Eric Homier
Putnam County, OH
SB 52 and HB 118 Opponent Testimony
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
House Public Utilities Committee
March 23rd, 2021

Chairmen and members of the committee, I am writing today to express my concern with SB 52 and HB 118.

My name is Eric Homier. I am a lifelong Ohio resident and family farmer. I live in Putnam County with my family, and my wife is a public-school teacher in neighboring Paulding County. We care deeply about this community and have seen firsthand the need for economic opportunity around here. Wind and solar can offer that economic opportunity, and for that reason I stand in opposition to the legislation under consideration today.

Over ten years ago, our town's largest employer moved, which has had a major impact on our community. As the jobs left, so did many of our neighbors, and it has really taken a toll. For rural folks, we have no other option of income aside from farming the land, and any Ohio farmer knows, in every five years of farming, you get one good year, one bad year, and the remainder are mediocre. Farmers don't get much control over their work.

Renewable energy projects offer a stable source of income that's not based on someone from Chicago setting market prices or the whims of Mother Nature. This bill is attempting to take away what little control we do have over our income. I am the one that owns my land, I take on the risk of farming every season, and I am the one that lives through sleepless nights worrying about my farm. When it comes to property rights, this bill opens a door that shouldn't be opened. You may be thinking about green energy, but this could end up impacting agriculture. I don't think this is right in any way, shape, or form.

For places like Putnam County, we have limited options for our tax base to fund our school districts and other municipal services. We're never going to get a Tesla Plant or a GM plant, so we need to look to alternative options like wind and solar projects to build up a better tax base. Looking at the broader impacts of these projects, the money from tax dollars is far more impactful than even the land lease payments that farmers and landowners receive.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the committee today.

Regards,
Eric Homier