

OPPONENT TESTIMONY
SB 52 Senate Energy & Public Utilities
Committee
Russell J. Adams — Licking County
March 12, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee. I am Russ Adams from Granville and rural Licking County.

I'm here, today, to oppose HB 118 and SB 52 as a soldier, as an author, as a lawyer, as a landowner, and perhaps most importantly, as a family man.

I have sympathy for those who have testified in favor of these bills. But for reasons I share today I believe their best solution is not HB 118 / SB 52. Perhaps Representative Dick Stein's question during Proponent Testimony about adjusting Power Siting Commission resources and procedures may be nearer the mark. Representative Hoops thoughts about increasing expert input seem helpful. Probably differences between wind and solar energy require different treatment. For now, I wish to register opposition to HB 118 and SB 52.

I have been a soldier with 20-years of service. My active duty was in the 18th Airborne Corps. As a Lieutenant Colonel (now retired) I see HB118 / SB 52 as dangerous and unfair particularly to our young people who must deal with our countries' future wars.

I have also been an author. From this 2012 book I'll share just a few lines that show how important cheap abundant local energy is to free society.

From page P183:¹ "During the twentieth century, oil became a crucial pillar of military power. Consider petroleum's role during World War II as Sir John Keegan wrote in his *History of Warfare*.

"It was only the American and British armed forces that could tactically re-supply their troops in the line through motor transport alone, and then thanks to the unique productive capacity of the American oil industry and automobile plants. So ample, indeed, were American resources that they sufficed not only to supply the U.S. Army and Navy with all the trucks and fuel they required but to equip the Red Army also with 395,883 trucks and **2,700,000 tons of gasoline, thus**

¹ Russell J. Adams JD, *A Letter to Dear Children, subtitled On our Overpopulation-violence Connection* (Dawn of Hope 2012), p. 183.

providing the means, as the Soviets themselves freely admitted later, by which it advanced from Stalingrad to Berlin.”²

Our dads and moms were able to achieve victory in the last World War of the last century partly because they were backed by cheap abundant local energy. The Axis Powers tried hard with Rommel in Arabia and by invading Russia to steal Siberian crude. Thankfully, they never could get enough cheap abundant local energy.

As a retired soldier, I think our grandchildren should have the clean abundant local energy that helped my father come home to our family from Iheya Jima in the Pacific many years ago!

Some of our brothers and sisters in the oil, gas, and coal, industries see that the days of old fuels are coming to a close. Wikipedia reports that in 2018, the largest solar developer in Europe, the third largest in the world outside our competitor, China, was a company now known as Lightsource BP. Yes, BP as in British Petroleum, the spin-off from Ohio’s oil industry. You all know that during the decades after the Civil War, Ohio and Pennsylvania were the center of a U.S. oil industry. They provided abundant local energy to an energy-hungry world.

Later, of course, consumption increased. Sources of old fuels began coming to Ohio from further away. Texas and our American West after 1916. Alaska. Today from distances like 7,000 miles in places as far away as Arabia!

Now an old spin off from Ohio’s original oil and gas industry has now come back to good old Ohio with new ways to generate cheap abundant local energy!

When our brothers and sisters in the oil, gas, and coal, industries warn us by their conduct that old energy is coming to an end, my knuckles go roller-coaster white. Because that means our grandchildren, my own and yours, face a ferociously uncertain and competitive world without the cheap abundant local energy that once had our backs.

I think that veterans should fear HB 118, SB 52. Veterans should fear such bills when we consider what future veterans are likely to face in the future.

As a country lawyer serving Central Ohio from Granville for almost half a century, I also oppose HB 118 and SB 52 for different reasons: for distorting free enterprise, for distorting free and competitive markets, for refusing fairness to new fuels our grandchildren must have while instead, coddling old fuels.

² Sir John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 308.

Your Ohio predecessors set up the very-careful checks and balances of the Ohio Power Siting Board to favor continued supplies of cheap abundant local energy. That Power Siting Board was created so that projects for providing cheap, abundant local energy would not be killed by parochial expressions of NIMBY, that acronym for “Not In My Back Yard.” For years your Power Siting procedures have helped Ohio power producers, generators, transporters, and utilities, **keep Ohio energy strong.**

Of course, you have the power the power to abandon institutions that have, overall, served cheap abundant local energy well. But to do that and retain fairness and freely competitive markets, you should apply HB 118 / SB 52’s provisions equally not just to the new fuels our grandchildren deserve, but to all the old fuels too. You should apply HB 118 / SB 52’s new regulations to all of Ohio’s remaining wildcatters, our oil, gas, chemical transmission pipelines, our nuclear and other utilities. Otherwise, HB 118 and SB 52 may be seen as protecting old fuels against competition from less expensive renewable energies that our grandchildren deserve.

Otherwise, by imposing onerous new regulations on cheap abundant local energy for tomorrow’s children while protecting old fuels, HB 118 / SB 52 may be seen as enacting a **renewables ban** that kills the goose that lays Ohio’s golden eggs.

Back in the 1970’s I was a young lawyer fresh out of Ohio State Law School. (I know, some of you are looking at me with my age apparent and you’re thinking, “Boy, has that ship sailed!”)

In 1979 the *Land And Water Law Review* published my law journal article called “An Analysis of Solar Legislation-Taxes and Easements.”³ I was becoming aware that our quality of life, that many of the blessings you and I enjoy as part of this great country and our great state, have flowed from access to cheap abundant local energy. By the 1980’s Harvard Business School’s *Energy Future* studies began exploring risks of future energy shortages.

I didn’t focus only on renewables. In the fall of 1982 the *Oil and Gas Tax Quarterly* law review published my article “Oil-Only Taxation: New Dangers in an Energy-Troubled Society.”

³ “An Analysis of Solar Legislation-Taxes and Easements 14 Land and Water Law Review 393 (1979).

My point, today, is that our children and grandchildren deserve blessings that only cheap abundant local energy can provide. You and I continue to enjoy such blessings. Tomorrow's children should enjoy the same.

Companies like Walmart are making massive renewable energy investments. They clearly understand what is at stake here. Energy companies like BP and Shell and so many others are responding powerfully to the writing on the wall. Ford and GM have electrifying goals as do their global competitors like VW and Audi and Tesla among so many others. I can't list all the corporate visionaries who are exploring new paths for tomorrow's people but I can say I salute them. And I'm convinced we should support their insightful efforts to keep cheap abundant local energy available for all generations yet to come.

Let's take just a moment to look at how other countries that sell us old fuels see us in the world today. About 15 years ago German businessmen began talking to Dubai about trying out a solar project that at first, Dubai considered a bit ridiculous. Dubai's thinking was basically this. Why develop solar when you are rich with some of the largest pools of cheap oil and gas left in the world? But they have a lot of our oil and gas money to play with so they could try a little experiment. That experiment would become known as Phase 1 of the Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum solar farm. It is located south of the city of Dubai in UAE, the United Arab Emirates, on the Persian Gulf.⁴

Imagine their surprise when they learned that their sun-farmed electricity was less expensive than if they were burning the cheapest gas they had! Dubai knows that old fuels will eventually run out. Page 15 of this book⁵ shows they fear that future.

But after Phase 1 they realized that sun-farmed electricity would let them sell more old fuels to older civilizations who still don't get it. One day, when older cultures are sadly remembering good old days, UAE expects renewables to keep UAE economies afloat in cheap abundant local energy even after they've sold, and we've burned, the last of their old fuels.

Since then, UAE has expanded that Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum solar farm through five more phases, not to mention starting other projects, with no end in sight.

⁴ YouTube (hereinafter YT) First Solar Project Overview: Phase 1 Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum 13MW PV Power Plant.

⁵ Note 1 at p. 15.

Japan's climate is more like our own. Friends, by 2002 Japan had become the world's largest producer of Solar Energy.⁶ Japan's population is about a third of our U.S. numbers.

Germany also has a climate not unlike our own. With a population of about a quarter of our U.S. numbers, Germany pushed ahead of U.S. sun-farmed solar energy in 2005. In 2008, Spain exceeded our US production of solar energy. 2015 was an important year. 2015 was when China blew past US solar production.

As you may know, China intends to become the colossus of our current century. Toward that goal, China is intent on becoming the world's dominant provider of everything necessary to produce cheap abundant local energy. By gaining an early lead, China will harvest diminishing costs as they scale up production of solar cells and related hardware. China also expects rich technological harvests as they encounter, solve, and innovate in renewable energy ahead of slower, older economies. Friends, between 2015 and 2018 China almost doubled their lead over the US in harvesting cheap abundant local energy from solar.

Ohio, once wealthy with oil, gas, coal, and nuclear energy, stands at a crossroads. Once rich with old energy, I hope Ohio will recognize what will become obvious with time. Our children and grandchildren need and deserve cheap abundant local energy. I oppose HB 118 / SB 52 because these bills throw hurdles across roads that I'm convinced our grandchildren must travel.

I am also a landowner. My farm has grown food for many decades. By farming electricity for a few decades, I'm hoping that in a small way my little farm can help future Americans bridge to more sustainable ways of life.

When I learned of the Open Road Renewables LLC project near Croton, Ohio, I studied what they are trying to do. Of course, money is involved. But such projects build slowly. I will be surprised if completion occurs while I am still alive.

But I support the good folk at Open Road Renewables for two reasons. First, I've come to like and respect them. And second, I believe with every fiber of my being that tomorrow's children deserve the blessings of cheap and abundant local energy just as you and I and earlier Ohioans have enjoyed.

Some of my landowning friends don't like HB 118 / SB 52 because these bills can limit their freedom to manage their own lands, to decide whether electricity can be among the crops they harvest. I find their concerns convincing but I won't further repeat them here.

⁶ YT Top Solar Energy Producing Countries.

Most important, I am here as a family man. I enjoy playing with grandkids. I've enjoyed getting down on all fours and pushing around our little cars complete with tiny exhaust pipes!

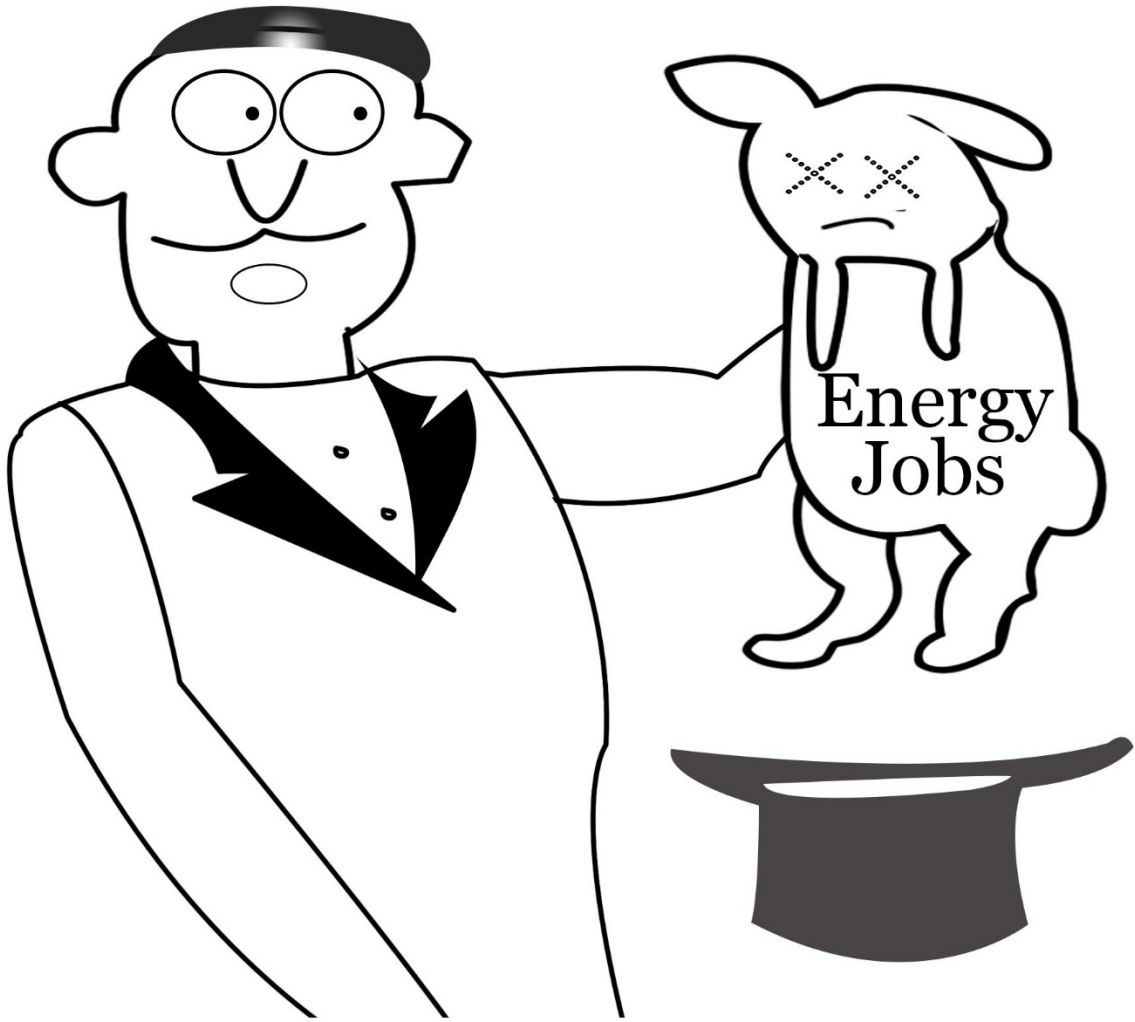
Wisdom suggests that down the road, our grandkids' real cars won't have exhaust pipes. A question then is this. **Will Ohio cars run on Ohio electricity?** Will Ohio retailers and factories and offices run on home-grown, Ohio-produced electricity? Or will rust-belt thinking still be sending our money to far-away foreign places as the prices of dwindling old fuels rise?

Members of this important Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee: Please tear down HB 118 & SB 52 as barriers to our children's best possible future.

Chairman Peterson, if members have questions, I will try to do my best.



H.B. 118 / S.B. 52 in action!



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