



**Senate Energy and Environment Committee
Testimony of Jeff Reinkemeyer
Director of Eastern Renewables Development
Avangrid Renewables, LLC**

November 29, 2016

Opponent Testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 320

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Gentile and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide today's testimony in opposition to substitute Senate Bill 320. My name is Jeff Reinkemeyer. I am a Director of Eastern Renewables Development for Avangrid Renewables. Our company is the second largest owner and operator of wind projects in the United States. Personally, I have developed nearly 400 MWs of wind energy projects currently in operation, and have been involved with ongoing development activity in several states in the East, Midwest, and Southeast. Specifically, in Ohio, I am working on early stage wind development projects in Putnam and Van Wert Counties. As you know, Avangrid Renewables is the owner and operator of the 304 MW Blue Creek Wind Farm in Van Wert and Paulding Counties. It is our hope to extend the benefits found at Blue Creek to the host communities for our Putnam and Van Wert projects, respectively Leipsic and Dog Creek. To achieve this we respectfully request that the committee amend S.B. 320 to provide for renewable energy requirements for all years, not just beginning in 2020. Also the committee should address the overly restrictive wind turbine set-back language enacted in House Bill 483 in 2014 and is now governing new, non-grandfathered wind development in Ohio.

Our experience at Blue Creek suggests that commercial scale wind farms coexist well with their host communities. Using Blue Creek as an example, to date, the project has received 24 total complaints. That is over nearly five years of operating 152 turbines. Seventeen complaints were related to television reception and those have been resolved favorably for the citizens. Five complaints have been for shadow flicker and three were for sound – all the complaints have been resolved. As I mentioned above, Blue Creek was permitted prior to the restrictive setbacks imposed by House Bill 483. I believe this operational record demonstrates that commercial scale wind farms can positively coexist in Ohio's rural communities under a siting and setback regime that allows for the economic siting of wind farms.

Blue Creek's host communities have enjoyed significant benefits. Blue Creek was the largest single private investment in Ohio in 2011 at \$600 million, it put 30 Ohio companies to work on construction, and for nearly five years it has been churning out clean energy and local benefits. We generate about eight hundred million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year. This electricity requires no water and creates no air emissions, and it is affordable. Another big benefit that potential customers tell us is they are interested in is the stability of a wind energy contract. We don't pay for fuel, so our price can be



locked in for a long term like twenty years. Local benefits are huge: we are the largest taxpayer in Van Wert County, and local school districts are doing terrific, leading-edge things with the additional revenue. Our landowner partners enjoy the new source of revenue as they deal with a roller coaster of commodity prices and bad weather, among other challenges. Landowner payments are currently \$2.4 million annually.

Community participation has been essential to Blue Creek's success. There are over 250 families participating in the project either through wind energy lease agreements or other easement agreements. There are more neighbor agreements at Blue Creek than any other Avangrid Renewables wind farm. The project exceeded the property line and residential setback requirement required at the time and has been operating safely with little public concern since its operation began in 2011.

We intend to bring the same commitment to working with host communities and operational safety at our proposed Leipsic and Dog Creek projects. Together these projects will provide the following benefits for their host communities.

Estimated Annual Landowner Royalties: \$750,000 – \$1,250,000

Estimated Annual Property Tax/Fee Revenue: \$2,500,000- \$3,000,000

Estimated Total Construction Jobs: 500-600

Estimated Total Permanent Jobs: 15-20

In addition to restoring the annual renewable energy mandates in S.B. 320 I respectfully request this committee consider legislation restoring the setback language found in statute prior to House Bill 483. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.