

TESTIMONY OF
ROBERT MCCONNELL
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
IN OPPOSITION TO THE HITE AMENDMENT TO REVISE SETBACKS FOR WIND TURBINES

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Committee, I am here to speak against any revision of the setbacks for industrial wind turbines that would measure the distance from my home rather than my property line. I also oppose any reduction of the 1,125-foot setback from property lines.

My wife, Diane and I have been involved in trying to achieve protective siting of wind turbines for more than a decade. In June of 2007 we requested the County Prosecutor to convene stakeholders in Champaign County to better understand the potential impacts of industrial wind turbines in our community. He did so and over the following weeks and months we studied a variety of resource materials including the work of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Science. In their report published in 2007 and entitled, Environmental Impact of Wind-Energy Projects, noise concerns were addressed and it was stated that noise emissions from wind turbines are a concern **within one half mile of the receptor**.

Later this ½ mile distance was recommended to be the setback standard incorporated into Ohio's Best Practices for siting industrial wind. The wind industry objected, they complained to Governor Strickland, they succeeded in shutting down the Ohio Wind Working Group without issuing a report, they had the state's consultant terminated and they left the people of Ohio without a protective policy.

Years later, the Ohio Power Siting Board (who was a part of the Wind Working Group) proposed a set of vague rules which citizens across Ohio opposed because they protected no one. In Champaign County, a group called Union Neighbors United, formed to advocate for safe siting and we provided testimony at those hearings. For ten years we have paid legal counsel to protect our community from unsafe wind siting. In that regard, our attorney, who testified for us at the most recent JCARR hearing on OPSB's proposed rules, again expressed concern that the rules do not protect people. He was told by Sen. Uecker that wind turbine siting rules must be reasonable but **they do not require protection of people**.

Today, the only thing that protects people, communities, land values and the well-being of NW Ohio is legislation that mandates setbacks measured from property lines. The current 1,125-foot distance is not excessive and it could be argued is less protective than in many other communities. For instance, next door in Indiana, the Rush County property line setback is 2,300 feet; Whitley County is 6.5x rotor diameter or 2,640 feet whichever is greater and Wells County is 1,800 feet.

In 2014 when Ohio's setback was revised to respect the property rights of landowners, Governor Kasich was widely quoted as saying, "***Private property rights are important. People choose to live somewhere. You just don't go in there and disrupt their life.***" We trust that you will continue to respect our private property rights to the quiet enjoyment of our homes AND our yards.

The Ohio Power Siting Board has proven incapable of proposing and administering regulations that protect people. The legislature must set minimum standards and it did in 2014 when it required a 1,125 foot property line setback. But we remain concerned that the OPSB continues to shirk responsibility for adopting enforceable standards for noise. Perhaps that should be the next subject of siting legislation.