



Sponsor Testimony HB 118
State Representatives Craig S. Riedel and Dick Stein

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the House Public Utilities Committee, thank you for allowing us to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 118. House Bill 118 is companion legislation to Senate Bill 52 sponsored by State Senators Bill Reineke and Rob McColley. This bill would permit a township referendum vote on wind farm and solar development certificates. It creates a process for the voters in local townships to approve or deny the placement of economically significant wind farm and solar facilities.

A few things that make this legislation unique are that 30 days prior to applying for a certificate from the Ohio Power Siting Board, developers would have to first provide notice of their application to the township trustees. This notice will include the location, geographical size, list of leaseholders, number of turbines or solar panels etc. It is important to have this step at the beginning so that the township trustees have the all of the information necessary on potential projects coming into the area.

Our offices have received numerous correspondences, both inside and outside of the 82nd and 57th House Districts, relating the fact that, once the Ohio Power Siting Board process for these projects begins, it is very difficult for constituents to provide ‘meaningful public input.’ As a state legislator in Northwest Ohio, I represent the counties with the most wind development in the state and it is crucial that their voices be heard.

Over the past five years, I have been gathering information on this subject. I learned that some areas welcome wind development on their properties and others do not. This legislation provides the best solution to both sides because it allows projects to move forward where they have community support and stops projects where they are not welcome by the voters.

I will now let Representative Stein speak to the public referendum options in this bill.

After the township trustees receive the information regarding a potential new project they will then decide whether they feel the project is a good fit for the community by voting on a Resolution Allowing Public Input, a Resolution Requiring Public Input, or no resolution.

- A Resolution Allowing Public Input grants qualified electors within the affected township the right to petition for a referendum.

- A Resolution Requiring Public Input stipulates that, if approved, a certificate (or amendment to such) is required to be submitted to the voters of the township for approval via referendum.



- No resolution would indicate public support for the project

A certificate or amendment issued by the Ohio Power Siting Board for a project that falls within the area of a township becomes effective on the 90th day after it is issued unless a referendum petition is filed with the local board of elections.

If the petition receives the required number of signatures of at least 8 percent of the total votes cast in the last gubernatorial election, the project must be approved by voters at the next primary or general election before moving forward.

Thank you for letting us address the committee today with our support for House Bill 118. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

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