

Testimony of Charles Groth
Seneca County, Ohio
In support of HB-118
Ohio House Public Utilities Committee
March 9, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, ranking member Smith, members of the committee, I write as a proponent of HB-118.

This is an issue that is extremely personal to me. Citizens such as myself deserve a voice in decisions that will have a profound impact on our rural communities. These projects present a very unique situation where the impacts are significant and wide stretching.

In addition to the need for a local referendum I am grateful to the sponsors of this bill for also addressing the issue of safe setbacks. Although I learned later that the project had been in development for a decade, I was not notified that my home was in the footprint of a wind project until the developer's required public meeting to open the OPSB application process. Information gleaned after the public meeting revealed that my home is closer to multiple turbine sites than the manufacturer's recommended safety setbacks during thunderstorms. It is frustrating to realize that an absentee landowner (who lives 80 miles away) can impose on the safety of my family in our own home without my knowledge or consent.

I testified at the Republic Wind OPSB public hearing on the prevalence in the project's public comments of form letters solicited by the developer. Since I have recently seen several ads on social media prompting me to contact my legislators and oppose this bill I will repeat here the following message from my testimony at that hearing: that it is much easier to simply sign your name to a letter that someone else wrote and that someone else will submit on your behalf (and that will not impact you personally) than it is to take the time and effort to find your own words and figure out how to navigate the system to submit your comment yourself. There is a level of time, effort and investment in the many heartfelt comments from those living within these projects that is lacking from form letters submitted by those whose homes will not be directly impacted.

This issue is so important to me that I have personally taken time off of work and made several trips to Columbus. It is essential that those who are forced to bear the burden of an industrial wind or solar project should have a voice by vote in determining if and when potential benefits are worth the cost. I urge you to not circumvent the voice of the people and support this bill.

Thank you for your time.

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