

Ohio Senate
House Public Utilities Committee
Opponent Testimony on House Bill 118

Testimony of Madaline Hanson
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Good morning Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith and members of the committee. My name is Madaline Hanson and I am the Wind Farm Administrator and Inventory Coordinator for EDP Renewables North America. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 118.

EDP Renewables is the fourth largest developer, owner and operator of wind farms in the United States and in the world. We currently have 53 wind farms and 8 solar facilities operating in North America - these produce enough energy to power approximately 2 million homes. To date we have invested more than \$750 million in four wind farms in Ohio.

I live in Van Wert County, in between the wind farms in Van Wert and EDPR's wind farms in Paulding County. I can see these wind farms from my home and they bring me pride. I am proud to be a part of our clean energy future. I love talking to people in my community about the wind farms, answering questions and sharing the broader benefits that they bring to the community.

I am not originally from Ohio, and I moved here for this job. I am one of many people that have found a new career path and a new opportunity because of the renewable energy industry. I see first hand the kind of impact our projects have on the community. I am the person who finds the local businesses to service our needs such as mow the grass throughout the wind farm, fix broken drain tiles, or the local machine shops to rework our tools. I also facilitate many of our local donations. I'm proud to share that we support many local efforts including school sports teams and events, United Way, American Legion, food pantries, and the local chamber to name a few. My primary job is to interface with all of the landowners in the community and make sure their needs are being met. I love this job and feel incredibly lucky to work in this industry and in Ohio.

In addition to the jobs, and local business opportunities that are created from our wind farms, there are many other benefits to the local communities. In total in Ohio, **our four wind farms have contributed more than \$8 million directly to local governments, schools, and other critical public services. Over the life of the wind farms, this amount will increase to more than \$100 million to support the communities hosting our projects.**

We also pay landowners directly to host wind farm infrastructure on their property – the wind turbines themselves, as well as the underground electrical lines that connect each of them, and the permanent private roads that provide access to each of the turbines. In Ohio, in total, **we have paid our approximately 600 landowners more than \$18 million for hosting our wind farms on their property.** This income is “weather-resistant” – regardless of if its been a good year for a landowner’s corn or beans, they can still count on the annual payments they will receive from the wind farm. **Over the life of the wind farms, we expect to pay an additional \$150 million to these families.**

We also offer payments to landowners who are living within the wind farm, but may not have enough acreage to host wind farm infrastructure. We work really hard to make sure that everyone in the community benefits from our projects.

Despite these major benefits, Ohio has made it increasingly more difficult to do business in the state.

In order to build a wind farm in Ohio, the project must be approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB). The pre-permitting and then the formal permitting process requires years of work and preliminary studies, with the actual formal permitting process with the OPSB lasting approximately one year. Wind farm and solar park permit applications filed with the OPSB typically run more than 2,000 pages, and include numerous studies, such as: decommissioning, transportation, sound, shadow, wildlife, wetlands, cultural resources, communications, and a visual assessment, among others.

We invest millions of dollars in venture capital, as we have no assurance of a successful project when we make these initial investments. We take on significant risk when investing in a wind or solar development in Ohio.

In addition to the lengthy, expensive permitting process, in 2014 the Ohio legislature passed a very aggressive property line setback requirement for wind farms – essentially giving non-participating property owners veto authority over their neighbors’ decision to host a turbine.

Ohio has proven wind and solar energy resources, a robust electric grid, and we are seeing historically strong demand for clean energy in the state and throughout the region. This is the time for Ohio to be capturing more and more clean energy marketshare, not closing the door on the industry.

If HB 118 were to pass, that door closes. HB 118 creates an even more unpredictable and prohibitively risky business environment for renewable energy in Ohio. It requires wind and solar energy developers, who have already spent millions of at-risk capital, to then face a series of mini-popularity contests by township voters. Our company believes this presents too great a risk to justify spending the capital to develop a project.

I encourage the members of this committee to oppose HB 118. Ohio landowners and communities deserve a chance to benefit from the tax dollars, landowner payments, jobs and rural economic development opportunities, as well as the clean energy that wind farms and solar parks bring. Please don't take that chance away.

Thank you,

Madaline Hanson
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