

June 23, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee- my name is Christopher Zeman and I wish to thank the Committee for being allowed the opportunity to provide testimony in our Statehouse today.

I am here to ask for your support of SB 52, a bill that would grant County Commissioners and County residents the opportunity to finally have a voice in the development of wind and solar projects in their County.

First, let me say this bill has been a long time coming- several of our Local and State Leaders, as well as members of the community, have worked tirelessly to get this bill to where it is today, and I believe no time is better than the present to get this issue wrapped up. Several folks have worked extremely hard to get their voices heard here today, and this is not the first time we have had to bring this fight into the Statehouse. Everyone has their opinion on this bill as well as wind and solar development, and they each have their right to that, however this bill gives everyone the opportunity to express that opinion before their County Commissioners and thus have the chance to provide a voice in the certification process. The Opponents of SB 52 will tell you that the current process for the certification of wind and solar, which at present is exclusively handled by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB), is more than an adequate method to handle the siting of wind and solar installations. Thus, they claim that SB 52 is just more “red tape” stalling the development of renewable energy; however, nothing could be further from the truth. Why- because the OPSB does not have the same knowledge of an area within a County as say maybe the local residents, local school leaders, township trustees, County park leaders, etc. These folks all have intimate knowledge about their areas and are more apt to handle specific issues on a County level versus the State level. With that being said, County representatives will be able to address these issues before they reach the State level which may ultimately help save time during the OPSB’s certification process. Furthermore, SB 52 will help alleviate time spent by local residents that wish to address specific issues with wind or solar siting simply by handling these matters locally with their County leaders.

At the end of the day, this whole thing is about one issue, giving County Leaders a voice over something that may or may not be a fit within their County or a specific area in their County. There are places for wind and solar in Ohio, but who knows best on where those places are than the “rank and file” members of the community, so let those who wish to have a voice do it in the County Commissioner's office instead of an OPSB hearing room.

Thank you,

Chris Zeman

Republic, OH