

Proponent Testimony of Jeremy J. Kitson  
SB 52  
2104 Harrison Center Road  
Ohio City, OH 45874  
June 22, 2021

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Ray, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Public Utilities Committee, my name is Jeremy Kitson and I am a rural resident of Harrison Township in Van Wert County. I write to you today in support of passage of SB 52 out of committee.

For the past seven years, I and many other rural residents from Van Wert County, have pleaded for meaningful local control on the siting of utility scale wind and solar projects. Our pleas have largely fallen on deaf ears at the Ohio Power Siting Board. While the board may have technical expertise in the area of energy generation siting, they have proven for years they lack any consideration for what we, rural Ohio, really expect when it comes to the job they have been tasked to do. SB 52 may just finally be the vehicle we have been fighting for over many years.

Currently, according to the PJM services queue, Van Wert County has six solar projects in the works, three of which are utility-scale. I have personally spoken to our county commissioners, and they are not aware of all of these potential projects. How can that be? It is my strong opinion that developers could care less about being forthright and upfront with our community when it comes to their plans. There is no bigger statement I can make that should convince you to pass SB 52 out of committee as soon as possible.

In addition, the issue of property rights is commonly mentioned. Who's property rights matter more, lease holders, non-lease holders, or both equally? The argument that "you can't tell me what I can and cannot do with my land" holds zero water. There are already many things that laws state you can and cannot do to your property. Can you grow poppy plants to get into the drug trade? No. Can you cultivate other illegal substances on your farm? No. Can you spray as much chemical as you want on your crop? No. Can you spread as much manure as you want on your ground? No. Zoning laws, drug laws, environmental laws, and agricultural laws already say what you can and cannot do with your land. I don't understand how people cannot understand this. Property rights are not absolute. Ask any lawyer and they will say the same thing.

Finally, if my neighbor can do something that would significantly affect the capital equity of my property, why in the world would I be excluded from this process? I can provide you as many studies as you would like that proves utility scale wind and solar projects crush the capital that people have rightfully built in their property. That needs to be strongly considered at some level and I am willing to have the County Commissioners and Township Trustees represent my interests. At least we elected them.

Have we really considered what taking tens of thousands of acres of prime farm ground out of production for decades would do to rural economies? It would be catastrophic for my community. It would be catastrophic to no longer be able to meet the world's food demand. Why is none of this even considered? We have to be smarter than this. SB 52 gives my community the right to protect my capital equity and ensure that my family will have

adequate sources of food the rest of our lives. I beg you, pass this bill and get it to Governor DeWine's desk. Rural Ohio deserves this.

Respectfully,

Jeremy J. Kitson  
Ohio City, OH