

March 19, 2021

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee Members
House Public Utilities Committee Members

Dear Chair Peterson, Chair Hoops and committee members:

Recently in a public proceeding, I was personally attacked for my position as the manager of the Blue Creek Wind Farm in Van Wert and Paulding Counties. Being thrust into this situation, I believe this to be an invitation to professionally display the positive impacts that we at Blue Creek and Avangrid Renewables have had in the Van Wert/Paulding County area.

I think there are two significant stories to tell. The first is the community impact by the company and me personally. In addition to over \$20 million dollars in PILOT payments to date, the project further supports the local economy with approximately \$2 million per year in landowner lease payments. To give a sense of scale, Blue Creek generates enough clean electricity to power the equivalent of about 76,000 homes and reduces carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to planting 138,000 acres of trees per year. We have also provided leadership in regional economic development and cultural initiatives. We were the first Ohio-based company to join the NE Indiana Regional Partnership, an organization that supports regional growth. Other Van Wert and Paulding companies and entities have followed suit, ensuring the Northwest Ohio benefits from regional economic development efforts. Also, the Avangrid Foundation sponsored a regional mural festival last year and I've been working to try to include Van Wert this year.

We have also supported many other local organizations to improve the quality of life for all residents in our area including a partnership with Science Central, which provides every 5th grader in Paulding and Van Wert Counties (our footprint) with a field trip experience. We have also provided funding for the YWCA Summer Food Program for eight years which provides underprivileged children who receive free lunch at school an opportunity to enjoy lunch where they otherwise might go hungry. The Convoy Opera House has received more than \$30,000 in renovation donations. Habitat for Humanity has benefited annually including seven build crews in 2020 during the pandemic, with even more planned for 2021, including expanding to Putnam County. Van Wert recently was helped with procurement of an announcing system, and previously Blue Creek supported an art restoration project in a local alley. Adopt-A-Highway has benefited for ten years from our volunteer labor. The list can go on and on.

The second area I would like to highlight is the support our company provides to veterans. I'm very proud that our Blue Creek crew is 40% veteran employed. As a disabled veteran, it's one of the reasons I joined the company.

Thank you for your time and feel free to ask for additional information.

Sincerely,
Neil Voje, USN Retired
Plant Manager
Blue Creek Wind Farm
13524 Fife Rd.
Van Wert, OH 45891