

Testimony of Daniel White
Seneca County, Ohio
In support of SB-52
Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
March 9, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, ranking member Williams, members of the committee, I write as a proponent of SB-52.

As a very concerned resident of Eden township in Seneca County, Ohio I am writing to ask your urgent and dutiful support for the passage of Senate Bill 52. The importance of SB52 (which would consistently and fairly provide local, protective representation for ALL Ohio residents) is two-fold:

1. It provides LOCAL control via referendum. The township resident/Trustee relationship is crucial for efficient, effective and long-term harmonious township stewardship. Having a fair, objective and representative LOCAL mechanism in place (for BOTH sides of a local issue) in the form of a referendum just makes LOCAL sense for all 88 counties' townships.
2. It provides (in the case of wind turbines) setbacks for potential sitings that are objectively consistent and equal to the actual manufacturer's required personal safety distances during storms, fires and mechanical failures (out-of-control extreme rotation, ice throw, blade throw, blade imbalance, tower collapse, foundation fault, etc.).

This legislation is fair for all residents as it gives a local and objective "voice by vote" mechanism to potentially affected communities. Without this mechanism powerful and extremely well-funded investors could much more easily transform a local agricultural or natural land resource having existed beneficially for hundreds of years into something industrial, short-term (10-, 20- or 30-years) and therefore very ill-fitting long-term. SB52 addresses this.

As mentioned above, local, personal safety should NOT be inconsistently encroached upon by a potential state regulated construction project. If "all politics is local" as the saying goes, then wind turbine safety should be all the more inherently safe by applying the individual turbine manufacturer's required safety distances for their own personnel, technicians, fire and county emergency agencies AS WELL AS residents who could potentially be unsafely exposed to and in an area of potential, future danger. SB52 addresses this.

There have been both studies on and discussions of the effect of property values when natural/agricultural/residential land use changes to industrial wind turbine use. That negative relationship increases (according to the studies) as wind turbines both increase in size and/or are sited with unrealistic and unsafe minimum siting distances. SB52 addresses this.

My wife and I were taken by surprise over the rapidity with which the wind turbine project impacting our Eden township/Seneca county Ohio area took shape. Quite a bit of it was done “under cover of darkness” (signing up lease holders) and did not become public knowledge until far long into the “standard” process. Because of the complexity and enormity of these potential projects/footprints, knowing sooner is most definitely better for ALL parties involved (private, public and governmental). SB52 addresses this.

Finally, as mentioned in the above “all politics is local” reference, the “many” township residents (in politics we could call it the “supermajority”) have been (up to now) unrepresented and yet potentially severely and negatively impacted (public safety, personal health, fallen property values, etc.). As it stands now the Ohio Power Siting Board (a State agency...far from Seneca county) has the power to ignore the will of the majority of a population (township, village, county, etc.) because there is currently no local voting mechanism to address and “make good” such a representative government oversight. SB52 addresses this.

Thank you in advance for correcting this representative government oversight.

Respectfully,

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