

PROPONENT TESTIMONY – SB 52
Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
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Seneca County
March 9, 2021

Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman: Senator Bob Peterson

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As a multi-decade resident of Seneca County I was shocked and appalled to learn that I have no meaningful input into the decision to build wind turbines across my entire community. This will change the area, which has a large number of residences dispersed across agricultural lands, into one big industrial zone over 250 square miles in size.

How is it that Ohio law allows this without all local residents being part of the decision? When did it become acceptable for the State to take such extensive control of individual communities? Why are wind energy corporations from outside Ohio being given preference over the interests of our state's own citizens? Wind energy projects are unlike other generation facilities in that they transform the character of huge swaths of land and entire communities instead of a hundred acres or so. They should not be treated the same under Ohio law. To do so violates the property rights of Ohio citizens.

I am not surprised now when I read that wind energy development is lagging in Ohio, and then read that other states, which use local control in locating such projects, are racing ahead. Areas like Paulding County OH are begging for wind projects while the industry seems intent on covering up Seneca County OH with them over a host of local objections. The local citizens are the only ones who know the priorities of their particular community. But why should wind companies care anything at all about what local residents think when the system does not require them to? This is not good policy, and it is not good business.

Until policy motivates developers to respect residents there is no future for the growth of wind energy in Ohio. Opposition will continue to grow stronger. But, by providing the opportunity for a referendum on wind projects, HB118 would provide incentive for the wind industry to work closely with local residents as it will remove state force from such huge decisions on the future of individual communities, and return those decisions to their rightful owners, the local citizens. State lawmakers should be thinking about the face of uncaring and heavy handed belligerence current wind siting policy is putting on the State of Ohio, its Governor, and its governing bodies.

HB118 will steer wind projects to where they are desired, restore dignity and respect to the citizens of Ohio, enable better development of wind energy, and remove the contentiousness of this issue from State politics.

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