

Statement by Steve Schlather
Opposing Senate Bill 52
March 20, 2021

I am writing to voice strong opposition to Senate Bill 52, which allows township voters to approve or reject solar or wind facilities. This bill creates unreasonable obstacles to development of renewable energy, which is sorely needed in Ohio both to improve our environment and our economy. This legislation does not apply to other forms of energy, only to renewables. After the corrupt debacle of House Bill 6, I would have thought the Ohio Legislature would try to avoid doing favors for the fossil fuel industries.

This legislation is not about local control. The state already provides a thorough review process by the Ohio Siting Board, which gives opportunities for local officials and residents to state any concerns about proposed wind farms and solar arrays. Providing an opportunity for a referendum after the siting process only complicates and delays projects that have been well vetted already. If the sponsors of this bill actually cared about local control, they would extend this voting process to all major infrastructure projects, including fracking and pipelines.

Ohio should not put obstacles in the way of developing renewable energy, but needs to accelerate its installation and use of wind and solar projects. Such developments will provide new sources of jobs and a modernized energy system that will meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Using carbon-free energy is a vital, necessary part of an effective strategy to slow climate change, which is already affecting our state through higher rainfall events, toxic algal blooms, spread of diseases, and other rising trends. Blocking renewable projects will also discourage many businesses from relocating to Ohio and further damage our state's economic development.

In short, SB52 is bad for Ohio's environment, economy, and residents. All senators who truly care about our state should vote against this legislation.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

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