

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

Sub. SB 52

Lesley L. Hange (Defiance County)

May 19, 2021

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee. My name is Lesley L. Hange and I reside in Defiance County. I am in support of Sub. Senate Bill 52 and would like to share my reasons why I support the passage of this bill.

I support Substitute Senate Bill 52, as it will give Ohio Townships the right to manage land use in a manner that is desired by the majority of its residents. Currently, townships are unable to have any say past being an intervening party with the OPSB. These proposed bills provide a reasonable and fair process for renewable energy developers' ability to identify which parts of Ohio are willing to welcome such investment into their community. I ask of you, please, to support and assist with the immediate passage of these two bills.

I support this legislation for many reasons. Multiple states throughout the United States have some form of local control for the governance of industrial wind/solar developments. Currently, Ohio is one of the least restrictive to these developers.

Current law, as well as the application process at the Ohio Power Siting Board, does not adequately (if at all) consider the concerns of a community that is impacted by wind/solar developments. Only the concerns of adjacent/abutting property owners have the opportunity to intervene and only if they can afford legal representation able to do so. Thus giving wind/solar developers an unfair advantage in the process as many have full-time legal staff within their

organization. The costs for abutting residents wishing to intervene can cost an upwards of \$50,000 to do so. Who can afford that?! The public interest, convenience and necessity of such projects should first take into account the public immediately surrounding such developments and who can be adversely affected by such developments. It is the opinion of these Ohioans that should carry significant weight in the wind/solar application process, as they know best how such a development will impact their community as a whole.

Ambiguous/vague criteria currently utilized and twisted by developers for corporate gain and only considered/judged by unelected staff unfamiliar with the area shouldn't carry the weight in these application processes (To be exact, eight determining criteria (as defined by the Ohio Power Siting Board) of which only seven apply to wind/solar). Residents and businesses, other than wind/solar developments, in this case, have had to comply with local zoning and regulations for decades. Thus, creating an unfair advantage for wind/solar developments that will consume thousands of acres of prime agricultural land, create minimal full-time employment opportunities for local residents, and while enjoying large energy investment/energy production tax credits (in some cases close to equal that which residential consumers pay per kilowatt hour). These public utilities personal property taxes can change at any time. The utility companies are fighting these taxes all the time. If and when they defeat this tax requirement, the communities these projects are supposed to be benefiting financially, won't actually receive the money they have been promised they would gain.

On a more personal level, My family is currently in the midst of being a family adversely affected by a proposed solar development. If the Ohio Power Siting Board accepts the proposed project, the proposed project would sit directly across from our home. We have many, many concerns with this. The developers have misled our county commissioners and our county chair of economic development. The developer chairperson of 7X energy working on the proposed CEPHEUS Solar Project told the county commissioners and our economic development chairperson that the project would be located in “basically no man’s land”. WE are NOT NO MAN. We live here. Our neighbors live here. Our very proud agricultural community lives here. How insulting it is for him to make such a claim. We should have a say in such a project being located so close to our homes.

Our family is getting ready to construct a new home on our property. We have to have a building permit and abide by zoning regulations. Currently, these developers have ZERO regulation on where they can be located. We will watch the sunset over the 700 acres of solar panels instead of the beautiful agricultural countryside. We will receive the morning reflective glare as they face our property in the morning hours as well as the heat directed to our property. We can incur damage and fading to our house, siding, windows, interior furnishings, etc. We do not want to move from our property, as it is nearly a century-old family-owned farm initially bought by our family in 1924. Our property has been a family dwelling and farmed by the family since the initial purchase. It is our family legacy. Our community will lose agriculture by installing this facility. It will

negatively impact our community driving out residents and driving down property values. It will decrease the population of our primarily agricultural small town/village. Wildlife will be negatively affected- especially on one committed property which is adjacent to a wetland. This project is wrong for our area. A project of this grandeur should be isolated to industrialized areas not in agriculturally rich communities. We plan to fight this project tooth and nail all the way to the Ohio Supreme Court if we have to, fundraising along the way to pay for such an egregious expense.

In regards to health and safety, we are very concerned for the health and well-being of our family, especially our small toddler-aged daughter and any future children we hope to have. Solar panels' radiate EMF radiation. EMF has been linked to many psychological and mental health issues with higher integrated exposure as seen in research published in *Bioelectromagnetics*, 1997. Another study looking at effects of electromagnetic fields on mental health found that workers who worked around EMF and noise were suspected to have some kind of mental disorder (*Pak J Bio Sci...*, 2010). In May of 2011, the World Health Organization did a press release issuing warnings about the adverse effects of exposure to Electromagnetic fields such as cancer. In February 1997, a review of research on emotional and cognitive effects of EMF identified that exposure reduces serotonin levels and melatonin levels in blood and contributes to sleep disorders and depression (Welker, 1983). One of the scariest pieces of information that I have read is that in an article published in press by *Pathophysiology* (2013), the author states that the research on autism and

exposure to EMF is significant enough to add EMF to the list of exposures that degrades the human genome and impairs normal development, health and quality of life. I do not want to subject my child and future children to such a dangerous result. I am personally a special education teacher and have done research and sat in conferences on the topics of disabilities and autism. The numbers of children being diagnosed with these issues continues to grow all the time. The CDC estimates that nearly 1 in 54 children has autism in 2020, up 10% since 2018. Why? What is causing it? We still haven't figured that out, so why would we want to take the chance on our children by exposing them to one of the exposures that has been linked to the disruption of the human genome?

Please, I am pleading, pass this legislation. Put it to the senate for a vote. Bring control back to the communities that have to be impacted by these facilities. We best know how they will affect our community and the residents who live here. The greed of a few easily persuaded landowners and companies out of states thousands of miles away, shouldn't be the driving force behind these proposed projects. Those who have to be affected by them every day should have a voice. Pass this legislation. I beg you. Protect my child, my family and my family's legacy. Thank you.