

Testimony for Benjamin Gruber

Chairman McColley and committee members, thank you for opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 52.

My name is Benjamin Gruber from New Vienna and I am a farmer. I am opposed to SB 52 Substitute Bill and ask that you withdraw this bill from consideration.

The bill prevents me from having construction on a portion of my land unless the township trustees adopt a resolution designating all or part of the township an “energy development district.” Why would the township trustees need to adopt a resolution for me to decide what is best for my property? Then, a resolution can be passed by township trustees and within 30 days people 8% of the voters get to decide to vote on my choices for my property? Are you seriously considering something so oppressive for Ohio farmers and landowners?

I love the great state of Ohio for its values and strong support of property rights and being “open for business.” Part of these values include expanding businesses and progressing as a state, and renewable energy has and will continue to meet the needs of Ohio’s growing need for jobs and economic benefits.

SB 52 allows land owners not located near our property and individuals who rent land in your district to make financial and zoning decisions at the ballot regarding what we can do with our property *This effectively allows townships to kill an investment in farmland by a landowner on the eve of certification of the permit by the state.* This raises major constitutional issues for land owner’s rights. We have had numerous local elections that have rejected local zoning laws. Why is the state interfering in our local government operations? I am fine with renewable energy on my property and as your constituent, you should too.

The provisions in the bill suggest and offer to give township trustees all the land rights which is not only unfair, but against the conservative principles Ohio stands so proudly on. Do the trustees have the skills to look at the environmental studies, and 8-9 months of data collected currently by professionals? Or are they just going to make base-less decisions without information taking away my right to due process. Just because someone else does not like to look at a solar farm does not mean they deserve the right to control my rightfully owned land. This is just too much government interference, Ohio is a state that doesn’t like big government. Who wins with SB 52 passing? I am afraid if passed, you and I both know who will lose...

This bill takes away my decisions for my property, and my due process and hands it to government. Please vote no on SB 52 and take the side of pro landowners’ rights.