

May 19, 2021

Written testimony supporting Substitute SB 52

Chairman McColley
Vice Chairman Schuring
Ranking member Williams

I write this testimony today in support of Substitute Senate Bill 52 that allows for local control for large renewables like Solar and Wind.

First of all as a farmer I am offended by the reference, in the hearing notice, referring to wind projects as "wind farms." I have heard the same reference to solar. I am a firm believer that farms involve planting seeds that grow and produce a crop. Farms do not involve planting concrete which is the foundation for all of these projects.

I am a farmer, former commissioner, and advocate from Preble County. Having a group like the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) dictating land use by allowing untold acres of solar panels or wind turbines in a local jurisdiction is unacceptable. It is my understanding that Substitute Senate Bill 52 provides for local control for these situations. I am a strong proponent of this legislation.

The OPSB, I believe, was originally designed to make sure that the infrastructure for electric in Ohio was suitable to be able to deliver power where it was needed. They were looking at the big picture like where to put a power plant, a substation or transmission lines. While these do impact land use, the impact is very small. It is for the greater good.

Solar and Wind do not meet the same criteria as traditional electric described above. In Preble County there are nearly 3000 acres of solar panels proposed. 3000 acres is a gigantic change in land use that should be handled locally in a way similar to zoning changes, which are also changes in land use.

Also part of this 3000 acre proposal in Preble County is a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) proposal that will make these 3000 acres tax exempt for 40 years if this project moves forward. While the developer (or someone) plans to pay for what the taxes would be that remains to be seen and as a landowner in Preble County, who pays enough tax already, I am not willing to bet on the success of the PILOT. If these projects are as good as they are billed, they should be able to pay their fair share of taxes in the same manner that the other tax payers including utilities do in Preble County and everywhere else in Ohio.

There is an old adage that the best form of government is the most local. I fully agree with that. Substitute Senate Bill 52 is local government driven. It puts the land use decision in local hands on the front end and it allows the locals, who pay tax, to determine if they are willing to allow the possibility of something being tax exempt.

I ask that you pass Substitute Senate Bill 52 in a positive manner out of committee.

I am available for questions by phone at 937-336-1456.

Sincerely,
Jane Marshall

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