

Energy and Public Utilities Committee, Ohio Senate
Opponent Testimony on Sub SB 52
Ariel Miller
May 25, 2021

Dear Chair McColley, Vice-Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ariel Miller. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to you. I am writing in opposition to Sub SB 52 out of my ethical values as a Christian and as a Rotarian. This bill creates obstacles to wind and solar farms which far exceed those faced by fossil-fuel powered plants whose emissions endanger the health of those living nearby and the survival and economies of communities impacted by climate change, including my hometown, Cincinnati.

As a Christian, I am accountable to reduce the harm my way of life does to other people. Renewable energy is significantly less harmful than generation by fossil fuels. I am part of a team in the Diocese of Southern Ohio working to help congregations increase the energy efficiency of their buildings and reduce their carbon emissions. By increasing the risk of solar and wind farm projects being vetoed by local townships, you impede the progress of a more just, lower-cost solution to energy generation which could not only reduce the energy burden of communities – especially low-wage families who have been slammed by COVID-19 – but also offers farmers and counties a hugely valuable new stream of dependable revenue to help them weather drops in commodity prices and significantly improve funding for rural schools.

I have been a leader in anti-poverty solutions as a reporter and non-profit consultant for the Episcopal congregations of the Diocese of Southern Ohio for over thirty years. Many of our churches support community-based ecumenical or interfaith emergency assistance programs that rapidly run out of funds each month to prevent utility shut-offs. Fostering the most inexpensive and cleanest form of electricity generation is a priority for stabilizing our working low-income families and senior citizens on fixed incomes in urban and rural communities throughout Ohio.

As a Rotarian, I will cite to you two elements of the Rotary Four-Way Test which this bill fails completely. Is it fair to all concerned? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? Not to Ohioans struggling to pay their electric bills. Not to parents and children struggling with respiratory and cardiovascular disease exacerbated by the particulates emitted by fossil fuel plants – diseases which blight and shorten their lives. Not to farmers and rural school districts who would lose two decades of reliable revenue from lease payments and property taxes if a minority of local residents decide to oppose a solar or wind farm that passed all the hurdles and reviews of the Ohio Power Siting Board.

Why add additional hurdles just for wind and solar? And why send this anti-renewable energy message to businesses considering investing in Ohio? You are bucking the trend which major

companies like Procter and Gamble are setting: aiming for net-zero operations. I met last week with a major Cincinnati entrepreneur who described the market forces that make renewable energy the smart business choice even without tax credits.

This bill sends an anti-humanitarian and anti-business message. Please don't make Ohio go even farther backward. Our future is not in fossil fuels. Instead of fighting over these bills that create needless roadblocks to renewable energy, we should be teaming up to reduce dangers to communities' health and to improve funding for rural schools: equipping our future workforce, and fulfilling the responsibility we share to protect and care for all children. I would love to work with you to find strategies to make local communities clean, safe, and prosperous.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

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