



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Written Testimony of Eric Thumma
Director, Policy and Regulatory Affairs
Avangrid Renewables, LLC

October 11, 2017

Proponent Testimony for SB 188

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present today's written testimony. I am Eric Thumma, Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for Avangrid Renewables (formerly Iberdrola Renewables). Our company is one of the largest owners and operators of commercial scale wind farms in the United States, including the Blue Creek wind farm in Northwest, Ohio. Blue Creek is a 152 turbine wind farm totaling 304 MW in Van Wert and Paulding counties. The wind farm is an example of the investment that can be spurred by Senate Bill 188.

It is our view that wind farms like Blue Creek safely provide significant economic benefits to their host communities. Senate Bill 188 restores sensible and protective minimum setback requirements for commercial scale wind farms that will enable the responsible siting of wind farms. Avangrid Renewables supports Senate Bill 188 and encourages members to vote "aye."

Blue Creek was the largest single private investment in Ohio in 2011 at \$600 million, it put 30 Ohio companies to work on construction, and for nearly five years it has been providing clean energy and local benefits. We generate about eight hundred million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year. This electricity requires no water and creates no air emissions, and it is affordable. Another significant benefit that potential customers tell us is the price stability of the wind energy contract. We don't pay for fuel, so our price can be locked in for a long term like twenty years. Local benefits are significant: we are the largest taxpayer in Van Wert County, have historically been the 2nd largest taxpayer in Paulding county, behind only another wind farm, and local school districts are directly benefitting, and investing in additional technologies for their students. Our landowner partners enjoy the new source of revenue as they deal with a roller coaster of commodity prices and bad weather, among other challenges. Landowner payments are currently \$2.4 million annually.

Community participation has been essential to Blue Creek's success. There are more than 250 families participating in the project either through wind energy lease agreements or other easement agreements. There are more neighbor agreements at Blue Creek than any other Avangrid Renewables wind farm. The project exceeded the

property line and residential setback requirement required at the time and has been operating safely with little public concern since its operation began in 2011.

Avangrid Renewables has two projects in the early development stages. Senate Bill 188 will enable the company to refocus our efforts on bringing those projects forward, creating economic benefits for our partner communities and numerous farmers and landowners.

We thank the Committee for providing this opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 188. Avangrid Renewables supports Senate Bill 188 and respectfully urges members to vote "aye" for passage.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Thumma", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Eric Thumma
Director, Policy and Regulatory Affairs