

**Ohio Senate
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 188**

**Josh Knights, The Nature Conservancy in Ohio
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Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am Josh Knights, the Executive Director for The Nature Conservancy in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 188.

About The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a non-partisan, science-based organization that seeks to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work collaboratively with businesses, farmers, sportsmen groups, government and local communities to develop pragmatic, market-based solutions to conservation challenges, including air pollution. More than 65,000 Ohioans are Nature Conservancy supporters.

Windfarm Setback

The current restrictive windfarm setback is a barrier to business that hinders millions of dollars of new wind development in Ohio. It is not only excessive, but is unnecessary to protect human health and safety.

Prior to 2014, Ohio law included a requirement that a wind turbine be setback from a habitable, residential structure a total distance of 1,125 feet plus the length of the turbine's blade. A change in the setback requirement in 2014 kept the same distance, but changed the required setback to be measured from the property line instead of from a habitable, residential structure. No new windfarm developments have been proposed since the setback was changing, leaving millions of dollars in future potential investments to seek other markets. The construction of new wind farms would generate many new job opportunities in the state and, long term, the presence of existing wind farms provide local tax revenue.

The rationale for the current setback is based on human health and safety from concerns such as ice throw, noise, wind shear and shadow flicker. The previous setback was better designed to address these concerns, being measured from the point of a habitable, residential structure. Moreover, the Ohio Power Siting Board already has the authority to require greater setbacks on a case-by-case basis, suggesting that the new setback is an unnecessary regulatory burden on business.



The Nature Conservancy supports SB 188 as a well-balanced approach that adds protection for human health and safety while making it possible for new commercial windfarms to be located in Ohio. This bill increases the setback distance by 100 feet for a total of 1,225 feet plus blade length. Importantly, it also changes the setback requirement back to be measured from a habitable, residential structure instead of from the property line.

Attached is a white paper commissioned by The Nature Conservancy that provides more details on why the current windfarm setback is a barrier to business in Ohio.

Public Support for Wind

In July, The Nature Conservancy commissioned a poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, on the attitudes of registered voters in Ohio toward clean energy. The poll interviewed 813 voters, including an oversample of residents of Southeast Ohio. The poll results showed that a vast majority of Ohio voters support clean energy policies. Nearly nine out of ten of those interviewed would tell an elected official to support policies that encourage greater use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Ohio.

When asked specifically about wind energy, 77 percent of voters said that more emphasis should be placed on the development on wind energy. In addition, 86 percent of voters support creating more reasonable setback limits for the placement of new wind turbines to attract new development to Ohio. Support for wind remained high across the state, including voters in Southeast Ohio.

Removing roadblocks to renewable energy development in Ohio sends a clear message to businesses and investors that we want to be a clean energy leader alongside other states like Texas and Iowa. Easing the current wind turbine setback creates opportunities for attracting new investments to the state that will create jobs and provide Ohioans with cleaner sources of energy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 188. Please contact me if you have any questions.

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