

TESTIMONY OF LINDA HUGHES  
Logan County  
IN OPPOSITION TO Sub. H. B. 114

To revise the provisions governing renewable energy, energy efficiency, and peak demand reduction and to alter funding allocations under the Home Energy Assistance Program.

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Committee, I am here to speak against any revision of the setbacks for industrial wind turbines that would measure the distance from my home rather than my property line. I also object to any proposed reduction of the current 1,125-foot setback from property lines.

I would like to rebut some of the false claims of the wind industry which are used to deflect issues concerning the safe siting of industrial wind turbines.

AWEA and its Ohio developer affiliates claim that they are doing a favor to schools and local governments by seeking tax abatement and making payments in lieu of tax. Somehow the industry thinks that dangling money in front of County Commissioners will blind them to the harms wind developments impose on a radically altered environment. Developers hope also that inadequate setbacks from property lines will be ignored in favor of getting a little money to buy a new snow plow for the county.

But in the case of EverPower's Scioto Ridge project in Logan County, our Commissioners rejected the bribe. The June 15, 2016 Bellefontaine Examiner reported the adoption of a Resolution that read: "The Logan County Board of County Commissioners is not convinced that over the life of the project that granting the PILOT would benefit the community. Likewise, with respect to job creation, the Logan County Board of County Commissioners is not convinced that the amount of taxes abated would be exceeded by the benefit of gaining relatively few permanent employees."

The Resolution goes on to say "Tax abatements are to incentivize development in a specific location, not to create the business model for the project to be developed. It is curious that under the energy project law, the local governments are expected to take a loss of revenue while the State of Ohio's tax revenue (commercial activity tax, kilowatt hour tax, etc.) is to remain entirely whole."

It is ironic that the wind industry is trying to convince you to reduce setbacks from property lines because the community will benefit from taking a loss of revenue! I applaud the Logan County Commissioners for seeing through this convoluted argument.

And with respect to our schools, do you really think our property owners would support future school levies after government-granted uncompensated nuisance easements that do nothing but devalue our property are imposed? In the case of industrial wind turbine setbacks, less is less in every respect.

Senator Dolan and others apparently think that local control is important since they keep trying to say the opportunity to reject tax abatement is the equivalent of local control. No threatened community believes that for a minute and neither should you. EverPower has even stated they might build without the PILOT. But local control IS important and we ask that you amend this legislation to provide people in the impacted areas the opportunity to determine if and where industrial wind should be developed.

Not all communities are alike. We each have different needs and opportunities. Why should we be asked to relinquish a right given to every other community that enjoys local zoning?

Other false claims from the wind industry are that Ohio setbacks are the most stringent in the nation. Their PR in a report they distributed from 'A Renewable America' repeats this unfounded distinction. Maybe people don't notice that they are basing their claim on the year 2014. This is 2018. Everywhere, communities who now understand previously adopted wind-recommended setbacks harm people and property are moving aggressively to lengthen setbacks.

Don't be blinded. See this setback proposal in HB 114 for what it is. Special interest legislation.