

TESTIMONY OF PAULA HIGGINS
Champaign 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.

Seven years ago, my husband and I moved from a bustling city in Massachusetts to rural Rush Township in Champaign County. It was a welcome life adjustment and we were very happy to settle in to our first home. No one disclosed the magnitude of the pending wind farm and when I mentioned seeing one of the big yellow "NO WIND" signs, the realtor replied, "we are getting a wind farm!"

Six months later we went to our first standing room only meeting to learn the real truth of what was happening. We would never have purchased a home in the footprint of such a huge project and are now trapped and worried about the future value of our home.

Our first months in our home were so peaceful and in stark contrast to city life with all the hustle, bustle, and noise of our past apartment. No worries about being broken into or listening to neighbors arguing or looking out a window and seeing into someone's kitchen. Then there were the parking wars since most homes did not have adequate parking for residents. All this vanished when we settled in on North Parkview Rd in Woodstock. We have neighbors but would have to drive to visit them. We can park anywhere we want on our 3 acre property and having friends over will not start a parking war with neighbors on the street. Most of all it is the tranquil environment and unobstructed views of both sunrise and sunset. We absolutely love living in a rural farming community and would never choose to live near any type of industrial endeavor.

We will be living here for a few more years but since we are both in our sixties we will be downsizing at retirement. We are worried about the sale value of our home and of losing the money we have spent to make upgrades. Who will want to buy a

home that has wind turbines up to or exceeding fifty stories in height to the east and west? There will be about 3 or 4 turbines to the west of my home (T011, T016, T018) and there will be a cluster to the east (T010, T012, T014, T015, T100, T126). There will be shadow flicker and noise on both sides of my house with no escape. Our retirement safety net depends on getting the most from the sale of our home and I do not see that happening after researching property values throughout the country of homes within the footprint of a wind farm. It appears it can be anything from a 10% reduction to not sellable at all depending on situation.

In totality there will be about 50 to 55 wind turbines sprinkled throughout Champaign County. These monoliths do not belong in this community and it is sad to see long standing friendships broken up over this. Champaign County is pastoral and bucolic. There are rolling hills and fields of green everywhere. It is a laid back peaceful place and we are lucky to live here, for now.

Is it fair for some to lose the use of their land because it is too close to a turbine? Some folks unwittingly signed a good neighbor agreement since their home is too close to a turbine. The setback issue is cause for great concern. Have any of you gotten to read the actual content of a Good Neighbor Agreement basically prohibiting any form of complaint?

I am pleading with all of you to do the right thing. Please research independently on both sides of the issue and look beyond the money and lobbyists. Wind lobbyists claim there will be no impact on property values with turbines sited 1.2 times their height from my property line. I would like them to put their money where their mouth is and give people inside the footprint of the project a Property Value Guarantee. If they can't or won't back up their claims, why should you put my investment at risk?