

TESTIMONY OF KENT AND MARILYN HAMPTION

Hardin 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 writing to express my *strong* opposition to reducing wind turbine setbacks from the homes and farms of non-participating landowners and rural residents. I oppose any revision of the setbacks for industrial wind turbines that would measure the distance from a home rather than a property line. I also object to any proposed reduction of the current 1,125-foot setback from property lines.

My wife grew up on a family farm in Hardin County, Ohio which will be surrounded by the proposed Scioto Ridge Wind Farm. As this project has evolved, we learned firsthand of its many adverse impacts. We did not initially understand all its costs and drawbacks, and I am certain Ohio's Legislature and Siting Board does not understand them either.

It seems wind farms are mainly supported by those living in big cities, like Cleveland and Columbus, who want to support 'green' energy. And, like us, at the beginning of this project, their intentions are good. But they don't realize or appreciate the actual costs of wind power.

When Scioto Ridge was first proposed in 2008, my family discussed it at length. We liked the idea of producing free, clean energy on our farm! Our neighbors, —an optimistic and trusting people, were also enthusiastic. We all wanted to improve our community, and Hardin County certainly could use new industry and new jobs.

Unfortunately, this project has not lived up to expectations. The developer has not been forthright in disclosing its plans, and many landowners do not understand what wind farm leases will require of them. Small, non-participating landowners, and many residents who do not own land, will incur significant, uncompensated costs. Resentment abounds and has badly split neighbors into haves & have-nots. Many others have yet to realize the adverse impacts on their farms and communities.

Wind farm developers seek to consume the wind for free. They want the right to harvest all the breezes of the countryside, fill up our open spaces, emit audible and inaudible noise, flash red blinking obstruction lights into our homes where they are reflected in mirrors and any other reflective surface, cast moving shadows and drive down property values, all without paying any compensation to those of us 'unfortunate' enough to have the nuisance effects imposed on our property without the grant of easement.

And, it is not just the wind turbines per se that are objectionable. As proposed, the Scioto Ridge project would erect a multi-acre electric substation & interconnect directly across the road from our place. This 125' high industrial installation will be surrounded by security fence, illuminated

all night, and will constantly make noise. And, leading into it will be many high voltage transmission towers. The landowner across our road is delighted with his good fortune, but unlike us, he does not have to face this imposing installation at his front door!

My family worked at Marathon Oil for 56 years over three generations. Experience has taught us there is no such thing as "free" energy, whether costs are measured in dollars, a degraded environment, or human conflict. And oil industry regulators long ago learned to prohibit the practice of drilling wells next to a property line, seeking to drain the oil below a neighbor's property, *without* paying compensation.

But more fundamentally, I question why taxpayers should subsidize these facilities with tax credits, abatements and mandates. What is the wisdom of legally mandating one form of electricity generation over another? Why are wind developers being allowed to encroach on others' property? Economic decisions like these are more successfully left for free markets and local zoning ordinances to sort out. While I share the Legislature's concerns for the environment and for rising energy costs; fostering competition & applying clear, even-handed regulations to all power plants is a more appropriate and fair role for the Legislature.

Specifically, Ohio's Legislature should preserve the existing setbacks for not only turbines, but also for the machinery that supports them. It should require that plans for wind farms be completely disclosed *before* any leases are signed, not manipulated at the discretion of the developer and obscured in legalese at the Ohio Power Siting Board. And centralizing approval authority within the OPSB bypasses local communities critically affected by these wind farms. Local governments and residents in the footprint of the wind facility must have a say in the approval process.

Wind developers say they can't afford to pay 'non-participants'. In reality, they are seeking yet another subsidy. But economics teaches us that if costs exceed revenues, maybe that project shouldn't be built. In reality, these wind farms will increase the price of our electricity. Ohio will still be reliant on fossil fuels.

In conclusion, Ohio's Legislature has not truly considered the real impacts of wind farms on its rural communities and residents. The existing set-backs offer some protection for Ohio's rural residents, who otherwise will be run over by the wind developers. I urge you to preserve the existing set-backs.