

Proponent Testimony Senate Bill-234
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman - Senator Steve Wilson

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams,

Wind energy development can bring jobs and money to Ohio. But it must be done correctly if it is not to cause more harm than good. Unfortunately, the current policy as administered by the Ohio Power Siting Board is not protecting the citizens of Ohio and is indeed causing more harm than good.

At issue more than anything is public safety. The combination of evidence submitted to the OPSB blade throw workshop (showing blade throws hundreds of feet farther than current allowed setbacks) and the recently released turbine safety manual (showing current setbacks 2000' too close) is devastating news to any Ohio citizen living in the vicinity of a proposed project. Currently this would amount to well over one hundred thousand Ohio residents.

Ohio wind development policy needs to be revamped before any new projects are approved. Public safety demands it. The arguments of the wind industry and its lobbyists in opposition to this bill seem to focus on their ability to develop projects and make money instead of on public safety. Clearly they are not concerned about the citizens of Ohio. By providing the opportunity for a referendum on wind projects SB234 will enable citizens to defend their interests, be they safety or other concerns important to their local community.

I ask that this committee respect the citizens of Ohio by approving SB234 and allowing them final consent to wind projects in their local communities.

Thank you,

Nan M. Purvis
NAN M. PURVIS
1044 E. COUNTY RD 16
TIFFIN, OH 44883

Proponent Testimony SB-234
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Senator Steve Wilson - Chairman

Chairman Wilson and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee.

Senate Bill 234 is important and necessary legislation to correct deficiencies in Ohio policy regarding designing and locating wind energy projects in Ohio.

Not all areas in Ohio are suitable for wind development. Some have individual homes dispersed across the countryside and some do not, By providing for a local referendum, SB234 will proved a voice by vote for ALL citizens residing in the project area, whether they are in favor or opposed to the project.

The wind energy lobbyists make the point that setback distances applied to all neighboring properties will allow for homes in the area. But, as recent events have brought to light, setbacks currently written into law do NOT provide sufficient safety according to manuals recently made public in the Republic Wind case.

Clearly Ohio's policy regarding wind projects is in extreme disarray. Senators and Representatives cannot be expected to be experts on wind turbine safety and therefore should not be called upon to make such decisions. SB234 will bring the expertise of the turbine manufacturers to bear on this important issue of public safety, And, by providing for a local referendum, SB234 will allow the public to make sure they are being protected before consenting to a project in their individual community.

I ask that you support SB234 as it will ensure the safety and respect of Ohio citizens.

Thank you.

Serry Purris
Serry Purris
1044 East County #16
Tiffin, Ohio 44883

Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 234
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

Senator Steve Wilson – Chairman

Chairman Wilson and members of the committee,

Senate Bill 234 will address two very important concerns in the siting of industrial wind projects in Ohio.

The first concern is that the distance (setback) allowed by current law is far shorter than the distance currently being recommended by turbine builders. With all due respect, surely the manufacturers know better than a Lawmaker what hazards are involved with their products. SB234 will make sure that the distance specified by experts is applied to protect public safety in Ohio.

My second concern is with the recently growing eagle population in my area. Seneca County has become a refuge for the eagles over the last decade. Local residents have spent tons of money on nature preserves and it appears to have made the area attractive to the species once again.

SB234 would provide for a referendum vote on wind projects. Perhaps I am not in the majority in thinking the eagles are important. If indeed a vote proves that to be so then it will be much easier for me to accept the opinion of my neighbors than what at the moment appears to be the wishes of out of state corporations seeking to plunder my local area.

I ask that you support SB234 to protect public safety and to assure that local priorities are addressed by developers when designing wind projects.

Respectfully,



Betty Lou Feasel
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Proponent Testimony Senate Bill-234
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Senator Steve Wilson - Chairman

Senator Wilson and members of the Committee,

Much has been said about property rights in the debate over a wind referendum. But there are rights on both sides of a property line, that is why the line exists. Certain kinds of property development affect far more surrounding area than just the parcel they are located on. That is why the concept of zoning came into being.

Wind projects, consisting of dozens of the tallest machines man has ever built, do in fact affect the surrounding area for large distances. No other kind of development changes ENTIRE communities into heavy industrial zones. If there was ever a need for local zoning a wind farm is it. Every community is different. Some will welcome the money that comes with a wind project and some will prefer to keep them out for many good reasons. Reasons which only the local residents are aware. No "one size fits all" state administered approach could ever be designed to do such a job.

Yet, for some reason, Ohio has lumped wind projects in with gas plants and other projects which, because their footprint is small or so narrow, have relatively few effects in any one community. Just because a wind project and a gas power plant both produce electricity does not mean they should use the same process for siting. The effects they have on the surrounding area are inordinately different.

There should be no further development of wind projects in Ohio until this inappropriate siting policy is modified to deal with the issues such projects bring with them. SB234 will ensure that wind project developers address local concerns or else face the possibility of being rejected from the community.

Respectfully,

Verle Spitzer
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Tiffin Ohio 44883

Verle Spitzer

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Chairman - Senator Steve Wilson

Proponent Testimony Senate Bill-234

Chairman Wilson and Members of Energy and Public Utilities Committee,

If opposition testimony in the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee is any indication the wind industry will oppose SB-234 because they claim it will not allow them to build projects in Ohio. But they have made such claims in the past and have proven themselves incorrect by their actions.

When setbacks were lengthened in 2014 the industry loudly proclaimed (and is still proclaiming) that Ohio's "unreasonable" setbacks have halted development. Yet, at the same time, they are busily developing 6 projects in the Seneca County area alone, along with several more in other locations in NW Ohio. Now that it has become clear that even the current setbacks are far too short for public safety it is easy to see they are in a rush to get as many projects built as possible before these safety concerns come to the public's attention.

All of the recent wind development frenzy has attracted the public's attention and exposed the many issues that come into play when a wind project chooses your community to develop. I invite you to visit Seneca County and see how focused the local residents are on this subject. The first thing we learn is that we have no vote so therefore no real voice in the matter. The second thing we learn is that the projects use state backed force to override all the local zoning we put in place to protect ourselves. And now we learn from the manufacturers of the monster turbines that the setback distances the state is forcing on us are not even half as far as they should be!

There is absolutely no doubt that Ohio's wind siting policy is unreasonable and unsafe. No argument by the wind industry can overcome this fact. SB234 must be written into law before any new wind projects are allowed to build in Ohio. Once motivated by SB234 the wind industry will work with the citizens of Ohio to locate wind projects safely and properly. Until then they have no reason to worry about local residents because current law does not require it.

Thank you,

*Helen Spittler
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