

Testimony of Kevin Ledet
Huron County, Ohio
In support of SB 234
January 28, 2020

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide oral testimony in support SB 234. I would like to stress the need for a local referendum opportunity for the townships slated to host approved wind projects.

This bill is important for the safety, well-being and protection of Ohio citizens who find themselves inside of or near the footprint of an industrial wind project. I will be referencing Greenwich Wind Park, also known as Crosswinds Wind Power. This wind project has been approved by the OPSB for Greenwich Township, Huron County Ohio, which is part of the 13th Ohio Senate district represented by Senator Nathan Manning who is a co-sponsor of this bill, and I thank him. My wife and I have been residents of Greenwich Township for over 43 years.

The Greenwich wind project has been granted a certificate, by the OPSB, for construction of a wind project up to 60 megawatts output consisting of up to 25 turbines. These turbines will be 490 feet tall. There are 29 participating property owners that have signed leases and 124 non-participating adjacent property owners in this project. What is incredible to me is that 13 out of these 25 turbines are to be placed on land that belongs to absentee land owners. People that do not live in the community. More astonishing is that 11 out of these 13 turbines are to be placed on land that is owned by foreign investors from Germany.

What this means is that 52% of the turbines for this project will be placed on land that belongs to people who don't live in Greenwich Township. The outcome of this is that people who don't live here have the ability to make a devastating impact on the people that do live here. As of this moment communities like Greenwich Township have had no recourse to have our voices truly heard. This bill SB 234 by granting the right of a local referendum will give the members of the affected townships the right to vote. The ability to vote yes or no on the project that will directly affect them.

I've heard developers say how much money they bring into the local community with lease payments. If 52% of the turbines are located on absentees' landowners land then 52% of the lease payments don't stay in the community. I don't know how many absentee landowners are in the other projects footprints but I know Greenwich is not the exception.

The 29 participating owners are contrasted against a group of 124 non-participating adjacent property owners that were defined by the developer, Windlab. We took a survey of the 124 non-participating adjacent property owners back in 2014 and this survey with signatures can be found on the OPSB website in the public comments section. There were 75 non-participating adjacent property owners that responded. 73 out of the 75 are against the project. 97 % against the project. If you concede that the 29 participating property owners are still for the project that translates to 31 for and 73 against. Roughly 70% against. How can such numbers be overlooked? Rather easily when they aren't represented!

We know that the Greenwich Wind project will not be affected by this bill because it has already been issued a certificate. But if the developer has to reapply, wishes to modify or if another developer comes

to Greenwich Township, we will have a more level playing field. The passage of this bill will correct the injustice of preempting our local zoning and taking away our right to determine the character of our own community. Going forward, this injustice will be rectified in the truly American way - the ballot.

I've also heard the argument that a payment in lieu of taxes PILOT is a means of local control, I beg to differ with that. Greenwich Township trustees unanimously denied the PILOT to Swift Current and they said they are still going to build. Early on in Apex's Emerson Creek project in Huron and Erie Counties the developer said they would not build without a PILOT. The Huron County commissioners passed a resolution stating that when Apex completes all the necessary paper work that they would then grant Apex's Emerson Creek a PILOT. After that the community got involved with the commissioners and overwhelmingly sought to have this resolution rescinded. The Erie County commissioners later that year denied Apex a PILOT for the portion of Emerson Creek that was to be built in their county. The Huron County commissioners after studying the project further, rescinded the resolution about the PILOT. Later that month the Huron County commissioners denied the PILOT for Emerson Creek. The developer Apex's now says they will proceed without the PILOT. Enough said about a PILOT being a means of local control. The only thing a PILOT controls, by lessening, is the true revenue a community should get from a project.

My closing thoughts on this matter. Early in the Greenwich project and in many meetings with Apex at the Huron County Commissioner's office, the developers often made the remarks about how well they have been received in the respective communities. How they are being transparent and the communities are welcoming and for the projects. If that is truly the case, then why is the wind industry so dead set against a host community having the right to vote on the issue? If that is truly the case then passage of SB 234 would allow the local community an opportunity to validate what the wind developers have been telling you and the public for years. I see no harm in that.

Thank you. Kevin Ledet