



Opponent Testimony of Tom Bullock on Ohio Senate Bill 234  
Ohio Representative, Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy  
Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, Chair Steve Wilson  
February 11, 2020

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee: thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony as an opponent to Senate Bill 234. My name is Tom Bullock and I am the Ohio Representative for the Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy (CICE), a nationwide network of local chambers from every state in the nation. We help local chambers of commerce and their member companies navigate and prosper in the clean energy space.

Founded by local chamber executives, CICE's Advisory Council is comprised of chamber CEOs and senior staff. We are one of the largest local chamber organizations in the country, with 1,200 chambers in our network representing some 900,000 businesses. In Ohio, we have nearly 300 chambers representing more than 70,000 businesses.

Local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations are at the forefront of advocating for the economic growth of our communities, and in the era of cost-competitive, global competition, we recognize that energy is an increasingly important issue for our local businesses.

SB 234 is a troubling proposal that would single out wind energy development for local referenda that could result in cancellation of a project *after* permitting. This would impede property rights, worsen red tape, and impose a chilling effect that would deter wind energy development in Ohio.

Other energy industries, including pipelines, transmission lines, shale gas wells, and natural gas, coal, and nuclear generation, do not face similar obstacles—nor do other forms of non-energy development. This double standard makes poor economic policy and should not become law.

Or does this Committee intend to set a precedent in which development from those industries are likewise subjected to the same referendum vote, after permitting, that would lead to project cancellation? Does this Committee intend to establish a policy in which the preferences of owners of neighboring parcels and non-neighboring parcels may de facto veto legal development on parcels they do not own? S.B. 234 so disproportionately weights the preferences of non-owners over owners that it would involve Ohio in a radical experiment in development law that we can expect to be highly-disruptive to investment. Given that investors reasonably want certainty that the projects they invest in will be built, developed, allowed to legally operate, and produce revenue to pay off their investment, the effect of S.B. 234 would be to put a giant sign on the Ohio that says, “Investment Not Wanted Here: Buckeye State Closed To Business.”

S.B. 234 goes in exactly the wrong direction, especially for areas of our state in need of more investment, more economic activity, more growth of the tax base, and more workforce development. Chambers, economic development officials, and community leaders have seen or anticipate significant benefits from renewable clean energy projects to our businesses, schools, communities, and the economy.

Here are some vital economic statistics from U.S. Energy Information Administration's January 2020 inventory of electric generators: EIA expects 42 gigawatts of new capacity additions to start commercial operation in 2020. Solar and wind represent almost 32 GW, or 76%, of these additions. **Wind accounts for the largest share of these additions at 44%**, followed by solar and natural gas at 32% and 22%, respectively. The remaining 2% comes from hydroelectric generators and battery storage. **Five states account for more than half of the 2020 planned wind capacity additions:** Texas accounts for 32%; followed by Oklahoma at 6%; then Wyoming, Colorado, and Missouri at 5% each.

And in EIA's latest long-term projections, the U.S Energy Information Administration (EIA) **projects electricity generation from renewable sources such as wind and solar to surpass nuclear and coal by 2021** and to surpass natural gas in 2045. In the Annual Energy Outlook 2020 Reference case, the share of renewables in the U.S. electricity generation mix increases from 19% in 2019 to 38% in 2050. Most of that growth is attributed to wind and solar, which are projected to increase from half today to nearly 80% in 2050.

Ohio needs to take full advantage of the fast-growing clean energy sector that's already delivered more than 112,000 new jobs and billions in investment to our state. Additionally, access to renewable energy is often a top site selection priority for Fortune 100 and 500 companies. With the kind of industry growth projections you just heard, think how many more jobs and much more investment could benefit Ohio.

With this in mind, Ohio must adopt clear and consistent policies to encourage renewable clean energy development, not impose roadblocks, burdensome development regulations, or radical experiments in development law that would set a counterproductive precedent and deter investment.

That is why Senate Bill 234 should not be adopted in its current form. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition.