**OPPONENT TESTIMONY**

**SB 234**

**Anne Fry**

**February 11, 2020**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to offer opponent testimony on Senate Bill 234. My name is Anne Fry and I am a retired teacher and my husband and I are landowners in Seneca County.

I taught for 35 years in the Seneca East School District. After retiring from the public school I was an adjunct instructor at Heidelberg University in the School of Education, teaching classroom technology. Currently, I am a substitute teacher. I invested my life’s work in helping students have a brighter future. During this time, my husband and I also invested in land in an unzoned township in rural Seneca County. We worked hard to make these investments to help secure our retirement.

Article 1 Section 1 of our Ohio Constitution states: All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety. Unfortunately, this opportunity is being threatened by Senate Bill 234. This legislation is a massive and unacceptable threat to private property rights. MY property rights. The property rights of ALL Ohioans.

When our neighbor plants corn around our land, it provides a nice buffer from sound and light from the highway. When he plants soybeans, that buffer is gone. Should we be able to vote to prevent our neighbor from growing soybeans? Of course not. He should have the right to work his land as he chooses to support himself and his family. All I ask is that my husband and I be given the opportunity to do the same. Mr. Chairman and members, please support rural landowners trying to make a living and oppose Senate Bill 234.

This morning as I entered our capital city of the great state of Ohio, I marveled at the beauty and grandeur of the tall structures surrounding this capitol building. And I pondered, why is it acceptable for urban areas to have structures reaching to the sky yet rural farmland must be flat? This is the issue. People who live in the country do not welcome change. Looking out a window and seeing a tall structure a mile away is change. What is needed in rural Seneca County is economic change and economic growth. The school district where I spent my entire career was poor. At one time the teachers there were among the lowest paid in the state. I would not be able to rely only on my State Teachers Retirement pension. I saved and invested. I do not want my retirement years to be compromised because someone does not want to see a tall structure a mile away. This opposition is nothing new to rural areas. When the rural electric cooperatives brought electricity to the country, the wooden power poles were cut down in the darkness of night because people did not want to see a tall structure a mile away.

I worked all my life to bring a brighter future for students and now my own future looks dimmer because of this proposed violation of my property rights. We live in an unzoned township. Our neighbors live in an unzoned township. When you choose to live there, you do that knowing that fact. Knowing that your neighbor is able to do what they wish in order to be productive on their land. Whether that’s putting up a new grain silo, a grain dryer, a new hog barn, a cell phone tower, or, yes, farming the wind. I would like to understand why wind farms are the only target for Senate Bill 234.

Please encourage economic growth for my family and our community by voting no on Senate Bill 234.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today and I would be pleased to take any questions.