



Opponent Testimony of Ohio Senate Bill 234

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Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, Chair Steve Wilson

February 10, 2020

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my testimony to each of you as an opponent of Senate Bill 234.

My name is Susan Munroe and I'm the Director of Economic Development for Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy where I assist chambers of commerce and economic development leaders in Ohio to navigate the opportunities with renewable energy. I'm also the former Van Wert Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO where most every day I saw the turbines spin harvesting clean energy. This cash crop contributes millions in new tax revenues to Van Wert County schools, county government, the OSU extension office, the county library and many other community organizations as well provides critical new income for farmers who are trying their best to keep their family farm in the family for generations to come.

Quite simply whether its Paulding, Van Wert, Hardin, Seneca or other rural, wind-rich Ohio counties, wind is often the number one opportunity for economic growth. Harvesting the wind can welcome a young adult child back to work on the family farm, it provides farmers with extra income to buy ag equipment or additional land. Chamber and economic development leaders throughout the last several years, including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, have testified to the power of wind in Ohio and as well its economic benefits.

Regarding property value, no one knows better than leading Van Wert and Paulding County realtor Chet Straley who says: "Overall, farmland has seen the largest increase in value due to wind farm development. When you add one or more wind turbines, that's additional, guaranteed cash flow for the landowner every year for at least 20 years. I've sold farms and properties that have turbines on them with increased value. We've seen no decrease in residential value when a turbine is nearby. However, properties with good neighbor agreements are often desirable because these properties have a guaranteed annual payment of up to \$2,000, often an amount equal or close to the property taxes. What a great way to offset your taxes or other property expenses. I think that's great. I wish I had one in my backyard or nearby!"

Senate Bill 234 is an alarming proposal that would take away landowners' rights by subjecting wind energy development to local referenda that could result in cancellation of a project *after* permitting. It pits neighbor against neighbor, it's an attack on landowner property rights. No other development, much less energy resource development has to endure this kind of legislation at the local level. It presents a have and have not scenario where township residents would get to



cast a vote if their neighbors would be able to harvest another crop on their land to diversify their income.

Ohio chambers of commerce and economic development leaders should be able to compete with other states for development. But how can they do their jobs when such harmful, anti-conservative obstacles are imposed by the government? Ohio is once again trying to drive billions of dollars of investment and thousands of jobs including union jobs out of the Buckeye state with SB 234. Because that's what will happen if this bill passes.

This is not the pro-business image that Ohio should portray while trying to attract Fortune 500 companies, when many of them have goals to be powered by 100% renewable energy and procure that energy in the states they develop in.

For these reasons, we request that you oppose Senate Bill 234. Let's support, not suppress these opportunities for economic and job growth.

Thank you for your consideration. You are welcome to contact me with any questions.

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