

Written testimony of Anne Southworth, Esq. supporting Amended Senate Bill 52 in the hearing before the House Public Utilities Committee on June 23, 2021.

Most counties have taken the time and effort to produce Local Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Those are important and should receive deference. County Commissioners should have the power to develop exclusion zones which will protect the planning already undertaken. An entire county can be an exclusion zone or the Commissioners can designate areas of their county in which development would be detrimental as an exclusion zone.

Each Ohio county has areas that require protection. Our state has unusually productive farmland that needs to remain so. Our Ohio Department of Agriculture has a Farmland Preservation Program with that mission.

To date there has been no local presence at the Ohio Power Siting Board, an unelected body. We need local elected officials to represent local interests before this powerful Board.

Unless this bill is passed immediately, its protections will not be available to projects that have already reached critical points.