

January 29, 2016

Written Comments of
Dan Litchfield
on behalf of Iberdrola Renewables
for the Ohio Power Siting Board
Stakeholder Process for
Wind Siting Rules Reform



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Ohio Power Siting Board Stakeholder Process for Wind Siting Rules Reform**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Dan Litchfield, Senior Project Developer with Iberdrola Renewables. Since 2008 I have been working on wind energy projects in Ohio, and I am very proud of what our team accomplished with the development of our 304 MW Blue Creek Wind Farm in Van Wert and Paulding Counties, now safely and successfully operating for almost 4 years.

For those not involved from the beginning, Blue Creek was approved for construction after a lengthy and thorough review of the project. The permitting process was among the most thorough in the nation in our view, based on experience with operating wind projects in 19 different states. We recognized that we had the chance to be first to operate a utility scale wind farm in Ohio, and that came with a burden of building trust by being transparent and going above and beyond the requirements. So we did. We used residential setbacks larger than the minimum required, we voluntarily created a website to host all of our permitting documents in a format that was easier for the public to access than the standard OPSB docket (still online by the way: www.iberdrolarenewables.us/bluecreek), and we did everything else we could do to demonstrate openness and a willingness to collaborate with the community. We had a local office in downtown Van Wert for spontaneous community meetings. We attended dozens of local public meetings at Township halls and other venues. We ended up with 30,000 acres of leased farmland from 110 families, plus 140 neighbor agreements. During permitting, I shared digital computer maps of the project with a local community leader so he could analyze the data however he wanted. We have a road agreement that was signed by two counties and three townships and both counties approved our PILOT agreement that will deliver its 3rd annual payments within the next week.

I think our hard work, and the thorough review of the OPSB has paid off: Blue Creek has been running safely for 4 years with a very minimal amount of complaints, all of which have been addressed. There are over 1300 houses in our project boundary and a one mile buffer and to-date we have had 24 complaints. The largest single issue, representing 17 of the complaints, has been television reception for people with antennas, and we have resolved those issues with a combination of signal boosters or paying for satellite television service.

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Take care of the environment.

Consider the benefits: 18 new highly-skilled jobs, \$2.7 million per year in new local tax revenue and over \$2 million per year in local landowner payments. Blue Creek is the largest taxpayer in Van Wert County, and funds from our project have been used to equip every student in the Lincolnview Local School district with a computer device. We have upgraded and repaired the public roads used during construction, fixed drainage tile, and fundamentally boosted the local agricultural economy by allowing farmers to harness the wind howling over their properties.

The written comments from the MAREC group address my specific thoughts on the issues raised in the siting rules, so I won't dwell on them individually. But I will say that the general intent of the comments to the rules seems to complicate further wind development in Ohio. This is not warranted. Our track record shows the original siting rules are more than sufficient to protect the public interest. Clean energy is the future, as demonstrated by public opinion as well as a slew of recent deals with large consumer-centric corporations, especially technology companies, buying renewable energy. If anything, we should consider streamlining the rules and certainly rolling back the massive property line setback regulations that presently block further development.

Finally, because the nature of many of the comments to the rules relates to the human impact of wind farms, and because this issue is so important, I cordially invite everyone here and every other stakeholder in this issue to come to an outdoor lunch meeting at Blue Creek at some point in the future when the weather is warmer. I encourage everyone to make the trip to Van Wert County with me to see and hear a wind farm with their own senses and put these issues into context. We would like to introduce you to some local folks who want to share their perspective on having a wind farm in their community.

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