



Written Comments of Susan Munroe on
Ohio Power Siting Board Stakeholder Process for Wind Siting Rules Reform
January 29, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Susan Munroe and I am President/CEO, Van Wert Area Chamber of Commerce and I urge you to reject further complications to wind farm siting and roll back the oppressive, job-blocking, property line setbacks from 2014.

Van Wert County has seen tremendous positive impacts from the existing Blue Creek Wind Farm developed by Iberdrola Renewables, and this would not have happened if today's setback requirements were in place when the project was proposed. Blue Creek spent about \$25 million locally during construction, employing over 30 Ohio based companies and Ohioans performed 330,000 construction labor hours. Many of our member businesses experienced this economic surge: hotels, restaurants, gas stations and car and truck dealerships. We believe that a second wind farm that has been proposed can help attract a tenant to our 1600 acre Mega Site, the largest Ohio-certified jobs-ready site. The Mega Site is immediately adjacent to Iberdrola's proposed Dog Creek Wind Farm, which could be used to power whatever tenant or tenants come to our site. This could be a blockbuster double-whammy of economic opportunity for our community.

We are fortunate to have a second renewable developer working in our community - Apex Clean Energy, and the Van Wert Chamber congratulates them on the opening of their office in Ohio City.

Looking at the construction of Apex's projects and Iberdrola's second project, we see the potential for \$1.1 billion in capital investment in Van Wert County! This is a game changer. In addition to the \$2.1 million paid annually in local taxes by Blue Creek and about \$2 million in local landowner royalties, we could see new totals of \$7 million in local taxes and \$7 million in local revenue, plus a couple dozen new highly-skilled jobs. This is a remarkable opportunity for our rural community to solidify its agricultural base and invest in our schools and infrastructure. Already we are seeing great things from the schools with the new wind farm revenue. Lincolnview schools has about 900 students in Kindergarten through 12th grade and now every student in the school has a computer device, partly because of the wind farm.

Wind energy development generates economic prosperity for our schools, our community, our farmers and our businesses- quite literally out of thin air. Big businesses are committed to using renewable energy which is driving down their energy costs. Companies like Amazon, Google

and Facebook demand renewables, primarily wind, as part of their energy portfolio. As we recruit a tenant to our mega-site or other industrial parks, being on the leading edge of wind farm development provides Van Wert County with a game-changing competitive edge in our recruitment efforts.

In Van Wert, Ohio, people can take courses at Vantage Career Center to gain a wind technician certification and work on maintaining wind turbines. “Windsmiths” as they are known, are highly-skilled, highly-paid local jobs and could be a job category with real growth. Our community now has a substantial 26 wind energy maintenance positions, which accounts for almost that entire job category in Ohio. With only 435 MWs of wind installed, Ohio trails every neighboring state but Kentucky for wind energy installations. This is an industry just starting to grow here.

We currently have a major policy barrier that blocks further wind farm growth in our community: property line setbacks. As I understand the proceeding today, additional regulations are proposed to further hinder the siting of wind farms, and these are not warranted. Both Iberdrola and Apex have done a great job building relationships in this community, and we all should not be punished by more regulations.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my comments and I would be pleased to take any questions.

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