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LINCOLN RIDGE FARMS

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PUCO

August 16, 2010

Governor Ted Strickland  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RECEIVED

AUG 19 2010

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES SECTION

Reference: PUCO Case No. 09-1066 EL-BGN

Dear Governor Strickland,

We are writing you in regards to the ***Iberdrola Renewables wind energy project (The Blue Creek Wind Farm) in Van Wert County, Ohio.*** These are challenged times for Van Wert County and we appreciate your efforts to help us.

We have always done what we can to promote our county even during challenged economic times. During 1992, we designed and constructed 'Discover Van Wert County' in 'America Presents' at Ameri-Flora '92 in Columbus, Ohio. Our site was beside Japan's exhibit and across from the Monaco exhibit. We became a Kodak 'photo spot' and designated the most photographed exhibit. What a great experience for our county and our state. Well – here we go again, but it is 18 years later and also challenged times. The Iberdrola Renewables project will help change all of that. Our fellow citizens will soon share the enthusiasm.

Our family farm, Lincoln Ridge Farms, *est.1919*, leased our wind energy rights to Iberdrola Renewables. It's been a great experience – a good company and excellent people to work with. You should be very proud to have folks like this investing in our state. Also, Iberdrola Renewables already operates over 3600 MW of wind turbines throughout the United States at 41 different projects in 20 different states.

We are 4<sup>th</sup> generation operators of Lincoln Ridge Farms, presently known primarily as growers of produce. Today, we grow 25 acres of fruits and vegetables sold at our farm market in nearby Van Wert and two farm markets in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Our children and grandchildren, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generation are already involved in our operation and desire to carry on our heritage.

During the winter of 2010, our family purchased an additional 30 acres at a ***premium price***, as a wind turbine (#19) was planned for construction by Iberdrola Renewables, one of the first this fall. The 30 acres was originally part of Lincoln Ridge Farms and lays along US RT.30, adjacent to our operation. However, Iberdrola Renewables was recently informed by the Ohio Power Siting Board that our turbine, along with six others does not meet new set back requirements of 150% of the sum of tower height and rotor diameter (935') from public rights of way. In our situation, our turbine would be eliminated since we do not have enough land space to meet the new requirement.

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Technician                      Date Processed 8.19.10

The new set-back requirement comes at the 'last moment' of the permitting process, un-fair to Iberdrola Renewables in our opinion since ***Iberdrola Renewables has their own voluntary corporate policy of 131% of total height (624'), which exceeds the state-mandated minimum of 110% (524')***. The OPSB initially stated, incorrectly, that Iberdrola Renewables was planning their site in contravention to the manufacturers' safety guidelines, which is not correct and, in fact, GE Energy, which was the route source of the excessive setback has said it is not necessary to be used as a safety measure in this particular case. Also, our understanding is that Iberdrola Renewables has spent an estimated \$12,000 per turbine to date and has moved forward in good faith, facing very tight construction deadlines imposed upon them.

The loss of our turbine represents a loss of \$350 – 400,000 income over the next 30 years and a loss of tax revenue of approx \$540,000!

***However, it is not too late for re-consideration, as the Ohio Power Siting Board will meet on Monday, August 23 for a final review of the Blue Creek Wind Farm project. We are asking the board to strike condition #37, therefore allowing Iberdrola Renewables to construct at a minimum setback of 131' of total height as approved by their turbine manufacturer.***

Upon your review you will find (as we did) that the Ohio Power Siting Board went with 'fall back guidelines' from GE Energy – recommendation to be used in the absence of other guidelines. They are acting with an excessive level of regulation that does not significantly have any benefit on the public and only serves to punish both the project developer and our family.

Please help us save our turbine, thereby maximizing tax revenue to Van Wert County and income for our family farm. Please help improve Ohio's competitiveness both in costs of operation and policy. ***The Blue Creek Wind Farm by Iberdrola Renewables in Van Wert County will be the first wind turbine project in the State of Ohio, we're proud of that.*** We commend you, under your leadership and foresight, for your help to get us to where we are.

We would be honored with your presence at ground breaking ceremonies next month at our turbine site on our farm.

Sincerely,  
Jeff and Cathy Thomas  
Lincoln Ridge Farms  
6588 Pollock Rd.  
Convoy, Ohio 45832  
Cell: 419-771-0962

Cc: Rep. Lynn Wachtman  
Senator Steve Buehrer  
Ohio Power Siting Board  
Dale Arnold, Farm Bureau  
Nancy Bowen, Van Wert County Economic Dev. director