

Public comment for 18-0488-EL-BGN: Seneca Wind Farm

From: chris aichholz [<mailto:caichholz@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2018 2:45 PM
To: Puco ContactOPSB <contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov>
Subject: Fw: Re: RE: sPower Complaint - 18-0488-EL-BGN: Seneca Wind Farm

To whomever it may concern

Great letter to the editor that I would like tacked on to Seneca Wind's project as public comment!

<http://www.news-sentinel.com/opinion/2018/04/20/letter-to-the-editor-why-some-rural-communities-are-fighting-back-against-wind-development/>

Thanks

Chris Aichholz

News~Sentinel

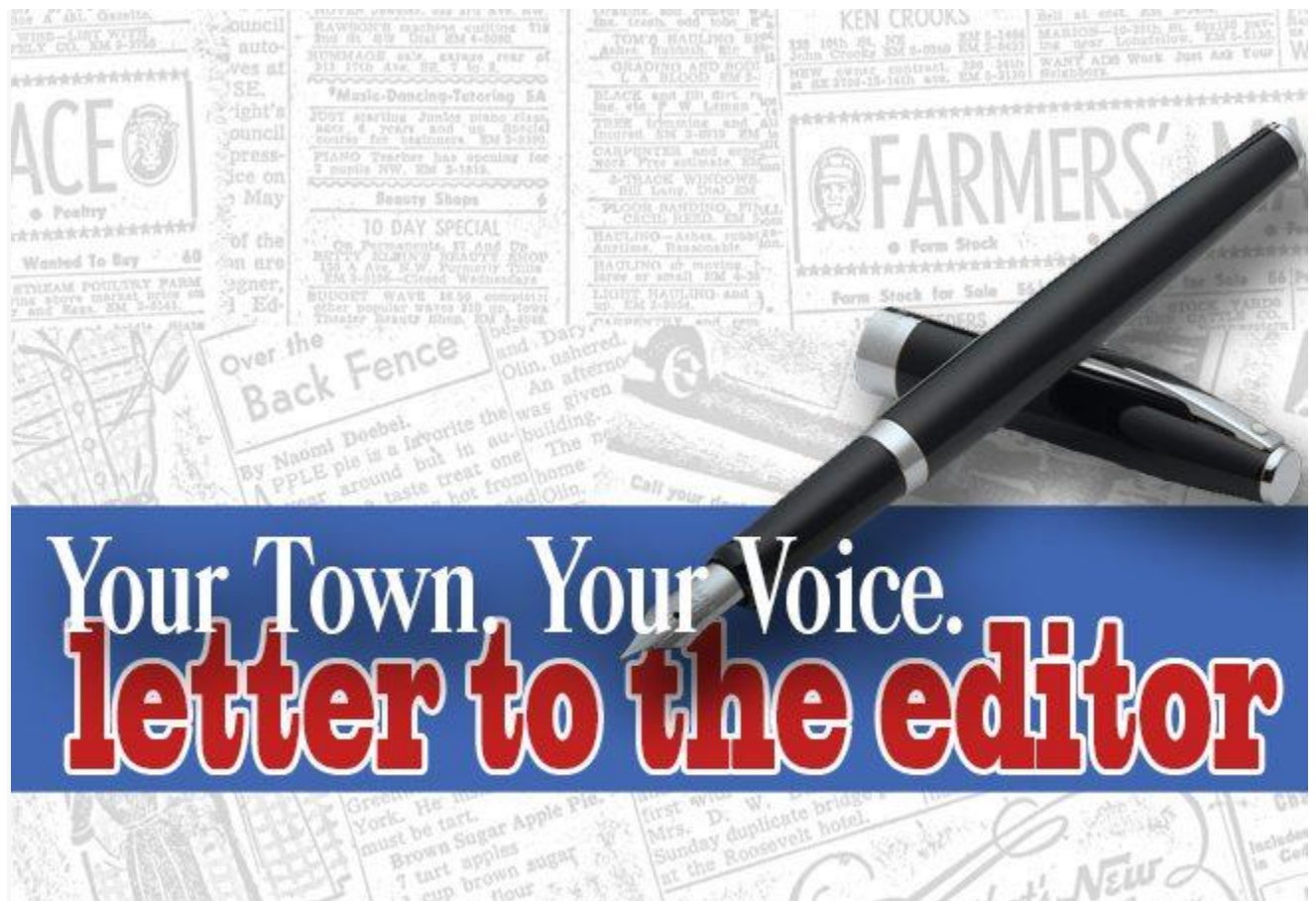
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Why some rural communities are fighting back against wind development

COMMENTARY

APR 20, 2018



There are many reasons why rural communities are fighting back against wind development. This isn't some crusade against a cleaner source of energy, that would be silly to think that people against living in a wind turbine project want dirty air and water. What this boils down to is property rights guaranteed by the constitution, and the safety, health, and welfare of all citizens in the rural community.

First on the property rights issue. The rural communities are zoned agricultural/residential. Nothing about industrial wind turbines are either of those. The fact is, wind turbines are industrial electric generators. It is an oxymoron to call them wind "farms." That is a fancy spin that pushes the idea of it being agricultural. And why do they push that? Because the wind industry expects a special land use exception to site wind turbines like they are agricultural.

I ask a simple question to the readers. Can anyone name one example of zoning regulation that measures someone's industrial structure to the foundation of another person's house? You can try to find it but it doesn't exist. This is largely the language in wind ordinances that wind developers look for when attacking a rural community in the cloak of darkness. They want the public to think this is a farming operation so they can justify measuring these things to a house and not a property line. They want this to look like a confined feeding operation like that of a hog barn which can be measured to a house. Then you get into the argument that "I would rather have a wind turbine than a hog barn."

Which leads to another question: When you build or choose to live in the rural community that is zoned for agriculture is it unreasonable to think you may experience agricultural nuisances? You know that comes with living rurally. A follow up to that, when you build or choose to live in the rural community that is zoned agricultural is it unreasonable to think you will be dealing with something industrial? Yes, that is unreasonable. It goes against the very essence of why people choose to live in the rural community.

Turbine manufacturers have recommended safety distances in their operations manual that is mainly established by Geube insurance, the main insurer for liability of industrial wind turbines. The setbacks in

these manuals are largely kept from the public for proprietary reasons. Shouldn't the public have a right to know just how dangerous the wind industry's own insurers define as what is safe? Setbacks all over the Midwest can easily be proven inadequate by many resources. If you want some specific information about proper setbacks please read some of the following links. Here is [a study](#) that proves that a 300' turbine can sling debris over 1700' from a physicist. Other recommendations based on safe setbacks can be found in many other places too ([1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)). As a final follow up to this section, ask any wind developer to produce a scientific, peer-reviewed, independent study that proves the setbacks they advocate for and claim are safe. They will duck and dodge. A developer recently turned that question around on me and I produced the study listed above along with two others studies. Then all I heard was silence.

This is about conflicting land uses and equitable zoning over all else. The language in leasing agreements plainly states there is a "no build" zone that extends out from a turbine. Measuring a turbine to someone's house can deny them the right to develop their land as they see fit in the future. That is theft, it is referred to as trespass zoning. If developers want to site wind turbines, the zoning must be to a neighboring landowners property line unless they sign a "good neighbor agreement" also known as a setback waiver.

This is perfectly legal right now. But wind developers do not want to negotiate the property rights of all landowners in a footprint. They expect zoning law to allow them to steal uncompensated easements from all non-participating landowners as a part of their robbery scheme. That is unconstitutional. This is the source of the main opposition for people in the rural community.

Next, it is a quality of life issue. Wind developers constantly say there is no scientific evidence that wind turbines affect people's health. Which poses another question. If that is true, then why does every leasing agreement offered admit all the health effects they so adamantly discredit actually do exist? I have copies of lease agreements and all the health effects are in every contract. And here is the bigger point, when you sign an agreement, you have been essentially "gagged" into speaking

negatively about wind turbines to the public. There is a gag order in the agreement. Why are those terms necessary if the wind industry is so right about discrediting the health effects? Independent studies show wind turbines do affect people's health and you can read that in many places ([1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)).

Thirdly, wind developers insist wind turbines do not have an adverse effect on home values. That can also be soundly refuted. They constantly cite a study done by the Lawrence Berkley Laboratory. That study is flawed. The Berkley study can be refuted in multiple sources ([1](#) and [2](#)). There is plenty of evidence that says wind turbines absolutely affect home values. Information about property value depreciation can be easily found ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), and [4](#)). If these reports are so wrong about property values and the wind industry is so right, then why do wind developers fight against offering the citizens a property value guarantee? Doesn't that seem appropriate given the lengths they go to try to prove that wind turbines do not result in property depreciation?

Finally, some specific refutations of the pro-wind crowd from Van Wert County that was interviewed in your recent series. The Chamber of Commerce president said that the Blue Creek Project is the "number one tourist attraction" in Van Wert County. Where is the proof of that? I and many other residents have not once heard people visiting our community for the wind turbines. That is pure speculation and opinion. Secondly, she calls the turbine money a "game changer" for our schools. The two school districts that receive wind money have been on sound financial footing for multiple decades because their taxpayers have routinely supported ballot issues. It has nothing to do with wind payments. The annual payments are fractions of the annual operating expenses of these districts. School funding can easily be found online to prove it.

The only district in the county that doesn't receive wind payments has far more academic opportunities than the other districts that do. The Van Wert City School district has fully implemented project-based learning through the New Tech Network, have two programs in the PTLW (project lead the way) methodology in Biomedical Science and Engineering, have a fully functional mass media television production studio on campus, a state respected robotics club, and a more diverse offering of courses. All of these without the addition of wind payments.

So it's a false narrative that wind payments are "game changers"; the truth is they help schools at a fraction of what is claimed.

It is also necessary to disclose some information regarding the pro-wind farmer interviewed in your piece. This farmer, admittedly, is compensated by hosting wind turbines. At a tune of \$20,000 or so per year, this farmer has already received over \$100,000 in payments and will garner over \$400,000 by the end of the terms of the contract. Would that not be enough to say a wind turbine's noise is "minimal?" Would that allow one to make no distinction between industrial wind turbines and a highway a mile away? If one believes so much in the cause, why would they not just donate their property for the cause? This comes down to money. Money for a minority of landowners at all of their neighbor's expense.

In conclusion, folks fighting for their quality of life are not against better means to serve our complicated energy needs. We are fighting for our property rights, our health, our guaranteed safety, and energy policy that makes sense. I haven't even touched on the false narrative perpetuated by the wind industry and how it's saving the Earth. I have plenty of science that proves that is plainly false.

I also haven't touched on the complicated economic picture that proves this technology firmly relies on tax and ratepayer support to produce a highly expensive, low-value product that negatively impacts all our bank accounts. Those are arguments that simply do not resonate with the average citizen. The complexities and dynamics are very difficult to comprehend. Lastly, the large amount of people who support wind technologies will never live near any wind installation, thus making it easy to push it on the rest of us.

— Jeremy Kitson, Citizens for Clear Skies, from Van Wert County, Ohio

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