

1-16-19

Dear Matt,

Enclosed please find
3 local LTE opposing
wind turbines in Seneca County
area.

Cases 18-0488-EL-BGN Seneca Wind
18-1607-EL-BGN Emerson Creek
17-2295-EL-BGN Republic Wind

Please may these LTE
be posted as public comments
to OPSB?

Best regards, 4194430533
Diane Hudok dhudok@gmail.com
6300 TR 151
Twp 44883

Opinion

6A — Tiffin, Ohio Wednesday, January 16, 2019

The Advertiser-Tribune

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EDITORIAL

DeWine has work to do for Ohioans

Mike DeWine became Ohio's governor Monday, as John Kasich leaves Columbus, perhaps to consider his options in 2020.

DeWine has a lot of work ahead of him, and the hopes of a lot of Ohioans resting on his shoulders.

There are positive signs already: He has appointed one of the most diverse cabinets in Buckeye State history (pending approval of the state Senate), according to a report from the Cincinnati Enquirer. He immediately signed six executive orders, creating the Governor's RecoveryOhio Initiative addressing the opioid

THE RISKS OF RIPPING OUT THE ROOTS

I reside in central Virginia, where I'm raising three sons with firm Ohio roots. I've had my eye and ear on the wind turbine projects for some time and was actually, initially, for the idea! In fact, the company trying to move their skyscrapers into Seneca County is based out of the town we currently call home. What a kick in the gut.

If I live so far away, why do I care? Why is this important to me? Why does the idea of this coming to fruition pain me to the marrow of my bones? Roots.

The only home I ever knew my dad built with his own hands at the age of 24. He worked hard, saved his money and bought the most beautiful farm down the road from "The Homestead," where my grandparents raised their four children. Under the paint on the red barn, which he also built by hand, lives his writing "J + S = ??". ... the young dreaming of the little feet that would soon chase and play and learn on the fruits of his labor.

My family landed in Ohio after coming to the U.S. for a better life and bigger promises six generations ago. We have always been farmers, artists of the land, stubborn and determined. Craving the sight of wheat blowing in the wind while the golden sun sets on its dancing whiskers is in my DNA, and my sons beam with delight and a quiet comfort at the foot of a large green field. They, like their ancestors, are their best selves with their hands in the dirt. My hope is that our jobs will

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lead us back. My hope is that at least one of my sons will return to our farm for good one day. My hope is to spend my retirement in a rocking chair on the front porch with my own grandbabies to enjoy the crisp fields and perfect view without shadow flicker and spinning metal forcing us inside.

Eden Township is my home and long before these projects were ever known to be a possibility, I would regularly say, "I will let NYC build up around that farm before I'd ever let anything happen to it." And here we are. I never thought the landscape that is burned into my memory could be at risk. The soil, the water, the ecosystem, those among us battling mental health or epilepsy are all under attack. My family collectively refused to sign on the dotted line when the opportunity presented itself because we love this land, this community and our neighbors too much. This will not be a problem that will go away or that we can ignore. Only one building in Columbus is taller than these will be; they will literally be standing and spinning over us 24/7.

Those opposed to the turbines are your farmers, your neighbors, your friends and our hearts are bleeding. I am incredibly for clean/green energy but when you dive into the documents outlining the proposed projects, they are extremely flawed with dubious fine print. We have begged commissioners Holly Stacy and Shayne Thomas to review tireless research and go back to the drawing board to preserve our community, but it's fallen on deaf ears.

I work for a major worldwide company on their field sales team. During our quarterly meetings, we are often challenged to spontaneously "sell" our favorite vacation to the others in the room without revealing the location until the audience votes at the end. To no surprise to those who know me well, I choose Tiffin, Ohio, and begin my pitch. I choose my hometown and sell it not only for the local pizza, ice cream and potato chips, but mostly for the warmth of the people and beauty of the landscape. I often tell people that going home is "like putting a sponge back in water."

I didn't see it until I stepped outside and took my blinders off. Tiffin, Ohio, isn't the norm. Small schools, historic buildings at every turn, flat sprawling landscape, authentic amazing people with long, storied tradition rooted firmly in this space. Rarely will you ever find another town who gives a police escort to the band and cheerleaders on the way to their home football game (go, Senecas). This place is unique and special and I'm so fearful that people aren't going to see it for what it is until the industrial wind turbine train runs us all over.

We are at a fork in the road. We will either see the people of Seneca County be heard and we will continue to benefit from future generations taking over the work of their elders or we will see impossible conditions, decreased land values, and hostility brew and take over like poison.

Warmly and worriedly,

Anna. (Feasel) Brooks,
Zion Crossroads, Virginia

LETTERS

VOCAL OPPOSITION CAN DROWN OUT MONEY

Recently, there have been several letters published here emphasizing potential revenue the wind industry could provide local school districts, particularly Seneca East. I appreciate the intent expressed in those letters. But in response, I would like to make clear that opposition to the wind industry does not equal opposition to local education. Indeed, many people who have yellow No Wind Turbine signs in their front yards are the same people who helped Seneca East pass its last levy by an almost 70-percent margin.

Any discussion of the wind industry's potential impact on education locally must acknowledge that in November, the Seneca East Board of Education voted unanimously to intervene before the Ohio Power Siting Board in the Seneca Wind project, citing its "interest in protecting its students and staff from potentially adverse impacts on their health, safety and welfare while at school or participating in school services or programs." The intervention also expresses concern about Seneca Wind's "potential impacts on residential, commercial and industrial development and property values within the District." More recently, Bellevue City Schools withdrew its support of the Apex-owned Republic Wind and Emerson Creek Wind projects.

At the June 5 Seneca County commissioners meeting, I read a letter by Jane Harper, a former commissioner from Tipton County, Indiana, who now regrets her role in allowing the wind industry to enter her county. "You can't lose something you never had," Harper points out, "so you are not 'losing' the supposed 'windfall' of money that the project purportedly brings in. What you will lose however, cannot be measured in dollars. You will lose the rural landscape as you know it and you will lose the closeness of 'community spirit' because people will hate each other over this and the presence of the towers will always be a constant reminder of the rift ... thus, the wounds will never heal." These are words from someone who has first-hand experience of the wind industry's impact on her community.

Funding for education is a worthwhile cause, but for schools, there is one thing even more critical than money — and that is students. Six weeks after I read the letter mentioned

above to our county commissioners, the Kokomo Tribune ran an article with the headline "Slumping enrollment threatens funding at Tipton schools." This is not an isolated occurrence. In fact, according to a non-profit group from Clinton County, Indiana, every school district in that state where wind farms were constructed has had a decrease in school population. While school enrollment in rural districts is obviously affected by many factors beyond the presence (or absence) of industrial wind turbines, I think these statistics show the Seneca East Board of Education is wise to be concerned about Seneca Wind's potential impact on the district.

Although many local wind leases were signed years before the rest of the community was made aware of the Seneca Wind project, it is now apparent the vast majority of residents who would live within Seneca Wind are opposed to its construction. Even the youngest of children cannot fail to notice the sea of yellow signs that cover so much of this county. If the wind industry continues using school funding to justify overriding the community's vehement objections (including the local board of education's unanimous opposition) I fear the message to our youth is that it is OK to ignore your neighbors' concerns as long as you receive enough money while you are doing it.

It is my hope our children instead will learn other lessons from the wind industry's foray into Seneca County. Rather than holding up money as the "end all, be all," I hope the current debate teaches that neighbors and friends can share good intentions even when they find themselves on opposite sides of an issue. And when the wind industry finally leaves Seneca County, I pray our children will look back on this chapter and recognize there is value in each individual voice. Joined together, I am confident those voices will ultimately prove that neighbors who are smart, engaging and passionate in their advocacy of their families and their community can create a chorus more powerful than any amount of money.

Charles Groth,
Bloomville

Sources:
Seneca County Board of Elections
data, accessible online at
seneca.ohiohouse.com
"Memorandum in Support of Peti-

tion for Leave to Intervene of the Board of Education of Seneca East Local School District," filed with the Ohio Power Siting Board Nov. 15, 2018, in Case No. 18-0488-EL—BGN

Full text of Harper's letter is available at edgarcountywatchdogs.com/2015/03/meet-jane-harper-board-member-who-regrets-voting-pro-wind/
"Slumping Enrollment Threatens Funding at Tipton Schools" July 28, 2018, accessible online at www.kokomotribune.com

"The Truth About Education and Industrial Wind" by Responsible Harvest of Clinton County Inc., accessible online at www.responsibleharvest.com

WIND FARMS AND STINKY FARMS

On the west side of Seneca County there is a huge landfill, run by a company called Sunny Farms, only as it turns out, it has become "stinky farms." This started as a local landfill that has now changed hands several times. It now takes out-of-county and out-of-state waste, including building materials which when decomposing, produces out-gassing that smells like rotten eggs. What does this do to the quality of life, health and property values to nearby residents? Did the landfill owners tell people in the vicinity what effects this would produce, before they took on this project? The answer would be, of course not.

Are the out-of-state people pushing for wind farms, or are they only telling them about a way to make more money from their land? Only by attending area meetings, getting information from research gathered from places already having gone through this experience, and reading scientific information have we come to the conclusion that wind farms are not the right answer for rural Seneca and surrounding counties. In fact, they may not be the solution to the energy question at all. Remember the "flavor of the week" when it was all about nuclear power plants for energy?

The subjects seem somewhat unrelated, but in the cases mentioned above, big corporations are trying to "dump" on areas far away from where they are headquartered. Let's learn a lesson from "stinky farms" and not create another problem with "windy farms" without a lot more research.

One opinion we read lately suggests that you should be able to do with your

land what you want. We agree wholeheartedly with this concept, *except* when what you do on your land has an adverse effect on the rest of us. We would imagine, that is why there are agencies, zoning laws and EPA regulations that tell us we have to do certain things and are not allowed to do others on *our* land, because it might have negative results on the lives of others or our world environment in general.

Let's learn from the problems that have resulted from the landfill site. Let's use a lot more discretion now and in the future about what we allow to happen that could or would harm the health and welfare of others. Let's look into solar power and geothermal energy, if we are looking for renewable energy sources. Let's not be sold a bill of goods. We need to be sure we are always vigilant and get all the facts before we jump in to a "quick fix!" If it sounds to good to be true, it probably is.

Caring grandparents,

Fred and Kay Zirger,
Tiffin

WALK YOUR DOG

January is National Walk Your Dog Month, and if you haven't already, it's a great time to start a healthy new habit with your canine companion.

Daily dog walks are part of being a responsible guardian, and they're vital to dogs' health and happiness. They're a great bonding opportunity for you and your canine companion—and they provide exercise and stress relief for the one holding the leash, too!

Walks not only help dogs stay in shape, they also provide much-needed mental stimulation and social interaction from investigating new smells, sights and sounds, and meeting other people and dogs along the way.

Be sure to use a comfortable harness (never a painful choke or prong collar) and keep young, elderly and small dogs warm on winter walks by bundling them in sweaters and booties. Afterward, clean off dogs' feet, legs and stomachs to remove salt and other chemicals that can sicken them. And remember, it's their walk, so give your pup plenty of time to stop and sniff the "news" on the trees and fire hydrants.

For more tips on caring for canine companions, visit www.PETA.org.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Pollard-Post,
The PETA Foundation

How to submit a letter:



Mail it to:
The Advertiser-Tribune
PO Box 778
Tiffin, Ohio 44883



E-mail it to:
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Letter policies:

Letters should be limited to 400 words. A letter must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Phone

numbers are not published, but are used for verification. Letters may be edited for length, grammar and newspaper style.

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