

## **Open letter on local control of utility-scale wind development**

In Seneca County, we have had significant public discourse around the development of wind resources and utility-scale wind farms. We have incredibly engaged citizens and public officials. If wind development moves forward in Ohio, then we feel duty-bound to offer our recommendations for improving the wind-development process.

### **Local Control**

When originally conceived, the Alternative Energy Zone (AEZ) was intended to function as de facto local control. In 2011, the commissioners, with support from local landowners, passed the AEZ in Seneca County. In 2019, this board of commissioners sunset that AEZ. As technology has changed, there has been a significant reduction in the cost to develop projects. Given the dynamic nature of the industry, the current regulations have not kept pace with these changes. The evidence suggests that the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) structure contained within the AEZ is no longer the incentive or control it once was. Projects continue to develop in counties that don't have (Seneca County) or never had (Huron County) an AEZ. It is, therefore, our recommendation that there be an effort undertaken at the Statehouse to return local control.

### **Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)**

Any request of a PILOT should be accompanied by a net present value calculation that keeps the local taxing authorities whole as to the time value of money.

### **Local Notification**

As commissioners, we have lived among our friends and neighbors as they have struggled to understand how this is happening in their community. We recommend that before any development, there should be an early warning letter sent to the citizens of the jurisdiction.

### **Conclusion**

Earlier notification, clarity on taxation and stronger local control would be a valuable first step in developing a more balanced relationship between property owners, citizens, communities, elected officials and wind developers.