

Molly Wingrove

From: Committee
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 9:57 AM
To: Molly Wingrove
Subject: FW: Local Township Control of Utility Solar and Wind

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From: Kelly Ralko <permits@chestnutdev.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 6:12 PM
To: Committee <committee@house.mi.gov>
Subject: Local Township Control of Utility Solar and Wind

Dear House Committee,

I am a resident in rural Conway Twp. For the past 2 years I have lost sleep over the prospect of our Township losing its legal ability to regulate utility scale solar and wind projects. Why? Because the developers have gotten greedy as anyone can. They are leasing every parcel of farmland available to them, surrounding homes and potentially covering entire Townships with renewable energy.

Our Township worked diligently to create an overlay that would allow for utility scale solar on close to 200 acres, in the least impactful area of our Township to all of its 3,500+ residents who live here and whose lives are here. The overlay is properly placed near transmission lines and is not far from where our neighboring Township of Cohoctah designated an overlay area of about 200 acres also near transit lines for utility scale solar. Their overlay is on Consumers Energy owned land, Conway Twp overlay is on agricultural land.

Our Townships both spent thousands of taxpayer dollars on a special attorney, planning firms and additional meetings with the public to create an ordinance for a land use that much of our Township could support and live with. Now, with the potential legislation to take away local zoning control of utility scale solar and wind projects, the state could undo everything our Township has worked so hard at creating. Will the taxpayers here and our Township be reimbursed?

If the state decides to take away local control of zoning from Townships you put yourself in the direct position to be sued by Townships and citizens all across the state. It is not a subject any of the residents across our state living in rural areas surrounded by agricultural land take lightly. Many of us have built our lives here and never planned to leave. There are thousands and thousands of people across the state who are against allowing the massive utility scale solar plants on anything more than the demonstrated need of their own communities. Local zoning rights are our rights as people living in Michigan. Townships can work together with the state to create reasonable ordinances for renewable energy, not just remove all control from the very people who live in their communities from day to day.

Our Townships are ALL different. My Township floods, extensively. My home and other throughout my Township have histories of flooding. Our Master Plan states that our Township is the only one in Livingston County that gives water out to surrounding communities. Large land disturbances from solar farms that are thousands of acres can quickly create devastating flooding for communities. Ask those residents in Lennon, MI where Assembly Solar was constructed. I have pictures of drainage ditches full, the outhouse for workers nearly floating and water pooling up towards neighboring property owners homes. This is unacceptable!

I urge everyone to not vote to remove local control for Utility scale solar and wind projects in our state. Leave our Township and small rural communities alone! We don't want to provide power to the big cities! We are willing to do our part for renewable energy and would be willing to do community solar or utility solar plant less than 200 acres. Not cover our entire Township with this industrial equipment that noone sees as any form of farming whatsoever. Farmers don't require building permits, they don't run underground electrical lines in trenches for power to run to transmission lines, this is clearly industrial production. It is insulting to rural Michigan citizens living in these communities that our Representatives and our State Government thinks we are dumb rural folk who will just live with this. Where I live we are well educated, individuals who will do everything in our legal power to protect our homes, our livelihoods and our communities from being covered in this garbage.

Sincerely,
Kelly Ralko
Conway Twp.
Livingston County, MI