
Letters to the Editor

Restrict port authority use of eminent domain

An open letter to the Warren County Port Authority:

Thank you for your service as a board member of the Port Authority of Warren County. You will shepherd future business opportunities in our county and I hope safeguard the quality of life of our current residents. The port authority can be a tremendous asset in its ability to bring parties together and facilitate the financing of economic development.

Some residents have misgivings about the formation of the port authority. This is primarily because of the port authority's current ability to execute eminent domain against property owners.

Eminent domain power has been given to you by the Board of County Commissioners by a split vote in Resolution 07-176. When your funding requests for the port authority go before the county commissioners in the next few weeks, I ask that you support an amendment to Resolution 07-176 that reflects the recently passed State Senate Bill 7.

SB 7 requires elected officials to approve land takings when an involved agency is composed completely of appointed members. It offers more strenuous protections against eminent domain abuse by its definitions of blight and requirements of notification. It is strongly

endorsed by both the Ohio and Warren County Farm Bureau. Farms are particularly vulnerable to eminent domain takings for road and road right of ways.

It is important for you to know that agriculture contributes \$1 billion in output and employs more than 13,900 people in Warren County. Food and forestry processing accounts for \$552.4 million in output. Cash receipts from marketing of farm commodities totaled nearly \$35.6 million. This can only increase as demand for biofuels becomes stronger.

It is not just farms who are vulnerable to eminent domain. This was made clear by the Norwood, Ohio, case, with which we are all familiar.

In the long run, eminent domain powers will impede your success not enhance it. And this is something that neither you nor the people you serve want as the outcome of your efforts. Please know that your decisions will have a long lasting effect on the residents of Turtlecreek Twp., and that is why your deliberations and judgment at this critical time are so important.

Please support an amendment to the enabling Resolution 07-176 to restrict the use of eminent domain by the port authority on which you serve.

Terry Banker
Turtlecreek Twp.