

**In Support of Kingwood Solar Farm, Case No: 21-0117-EL-B**

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I am the daughter of the current owner and manager of Spencer Farms, LLC, Jane Sweet. My family has a tie to this land since 1875 and will be part of the Kingwood proposed project area.

I spent every summer as a child on this farm with my grandparents. Those childhood experience instilled a great appreciation for nature and the living in a farming community. At the same time, I learned about the business side of farming. While sitting at the dinner table, my grandparents discussed corn prices as well as the cost of fertilizer, diesel and tractor repairs.

**Visually speaking our land is flat.** Driving at 55 mph on Rt 72, it takes less than <sup>45</sup>30 seconds to drive past our farm. The Kingwood project would install solar panels with the maximum height of 14 feet (in the AM and the PM) – for the majority of the day the panels will lay relatively flat. Professional landscaping including trees will be planted around the proposed area and will hide the solar panels in a few years' time.

**Being a farmer is a business,** ~~just like many in the audience who may own and operate their own business.~~ Recently, I was at a solar meeting and spoke to several farmers in the area - and the overwhelming response of what farming is like is that its either "feast or famine" with rising costs of commodities and no clear vision on end product, as many factors (including weather) are out of a farmers control. A number of farmers in this area are struggling to cover expenses and finding the labor needed to plant and harvest crops.

Farmers at times have to explore their options. The easiest one is to just sell the land and chance are a developer would come in and totally change the landscape. Constructing a large housing development takes years and years to develop with continued construction, mud and equipment not to mention the septic and well systems that cannot easily be removed to return land to farming.

Our family has emotional ties to our land and we want to keep the land in our family for future generations and not to a housing developer. So with this in mind, a solution is to diversify into an alternative crop such as solar which has many local and environment benefits.

**The Kingwood Project seems like a winning formula.** The cover crop of pollinator plants and medium growth vegetation on the fallow acreage would help regenerate our soil, be visually appealing and absorb water. Neighboring farmers would benefit from the surge of pollinating insects. We would add cleaner water to our aquifer with reduced fertilizer and herbicide use. This helps the whole community.

*including farm land preservation.*

There are 20 plus solar projects going on in Ohio. If all the current solar projects are developed it would utilize less than 1% of tillable farm land in Ohio. Is Greene County going to be in the forefront of an innovative movement to harness the power of the sun? I hope the Siting Board has a long term view of the situation.

Farmers need diversification in income streams to sustain our businesses. Power will be used closest to where it's generated. With that, I ask you let the farmers do what's right for their ~~personal~~ *private* property (our farm land) and the environment. Please do not hinder our ability to look at alternative crops like solar and plan for the continuation of our family farms into the future.