

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

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In the Matter of the :  
Application of Hillcrest :  
Solar I, LLC, for a :  
Certificate of :  
Environmental :  
Compatibility and Public : Case No. 17-1152-EL-BGN  
Need to Construct an :  
Electric Generation :  
Facility in Green :  
Township, Brown County, :  
Ohio. :

- - -

PROCEEDINGS

before Ms. Patricia Schabo and Ms. Megan Addison,  
Administrative Law Judges, at the Countryside Inn &  
Suites, 100 Leininger Street, Mount Orab, Ohio,  
called at 6:34 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2017.

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PUBLIC HEARING - MOUNT ORAB

- - -

ARMSTRONG & OKEY, INC.  
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- - -

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease, LLP  
3 By Mr. Michael J. Settineri  
4 52 East Gay Street  
5 Columbus, Ohio 43216-1008

6 On behalf of the Applicant.

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Thursday Evening Session,  
November 30, 2017.

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ALJ SCHABO: Let's go on the record.

The Ohio Power Siting Board has assigned for public hearing at this time and place Case No. 17-1152-EL-BGN which is captioned in the Matter of the Application of Hillcrest Solar I, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need to Construct an Electric Generation Facility in Green Township, Brown County, Ohio.

My name is Trish Schabo. With me is Megan Addison. We are the Administrative Law Judges assigned with the -- with the Board's Legal Department. We have been assigned to conduct this hearing.

With us are Grant Zido and Zach Hoffman from the Public Affairs staff of the Ohio Power Siting Board. Mr. Zido and Mr. Hoffman might be able to help with any general questions you may have about the application and about the process for this proceeding.

The local public hearings scheduled in this case are only one aspect of the process. An evidentiary hearing is also scheduled to commence on

1 December 14, 2017, at the Board offices in Columbus.

2 At this time I would like to begin by  
3 taking appearances of counsel on behalf of parties.

4 MR. SETTINERI: Thank you, your Honors.  
5 On behalf of Hillcrest Solar I, LLC, Mike Settineri  
6 with the law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease,  
7 Columbus, Ohio 43215, street address 52 East Gay  
8 Street.

9 Also with me tonight is Doug Herling, the  
10 Project Manager for the Hillcrest Solar Farm, Project  
11 Manager, as well as David Savage, Vice President with  
12 Open Renewables. And for the group they will be able  
13 to answer questions after the meeting for those who  
14 have any questions. Thank you.

15 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. Is there anyone  
16 here on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation?

17 MR. MOORE: Yes, ma'am. Your Honor, my  
18 name is Dale Arnold. I am Director of Energy,  
19 Utility, and Local Government Policy with the Ohio  
20 Farm Bureau, and I am here to observe this evening.  
21 Thank you very much.

22 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, Mr. Arnold. Is  
23 there anyone else here on behalf of any other entity  
24 who has or intends to intervene?

25 Okay. So the subject of this evening's

public hearing is an application filed with the Board on June 29, 2017, by Hillcrest Solar, which I will refer to as Hillcrest most likely. With this application Hillcrest seeks the Board's approval to construct, maintain, and operate a 125 megawatt solar powered electric generating facility in Green Township, Brown County, Ohio.

As proposed, the facility will be located on up to 1,100 acres of privately-owned land within a larger area of approximately 2,100 acres about 3 miles north of Mount Orab.

The purpose of this evening's hearing is to receive comments from the public regarding Hillcrest's application in this case. It is not intended to be a question and answer session. Instead this is your opportunity to let the Board know what you think about the proposed solar facility. As I mentioned a moment ago, there is also an evidentiary hearing scheduled to be held at the Board's office in Columbus on December 14, 2017.

I would also note that the Board's staff report was filed on November 15. This is the recommendation of the Board's staff. It does not necessarily reflect what the Board's final determination in this case will be.

Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a court reporter. If you do plan to testify, please speak clearly so that she can accurately reflect your comments on the record. Also if you have any prepared written statements, it would be helpful if you provide a copy of that to the court reporter.

When you arrived, you were offered the opportunity to sign up to testify by Mr. Zido. After I finish with my introduction, I will begin calling the witnesses forward in the order they signed up on the sheet, and I will ask you to come to the table and face the court reporter, maybe sit on this end chair or stand if you are more comfortable.

Before you present your testimony, I'll ask you to take an oath or an affirmation that what you are about to say is the truth. Your testimony will be considered part of the official record in the case, and it will be reviewed by the Board before they make their final decision on the application.

Additionally, the parties to the case and I will be permitted to ask you questions about your statement. Should you decide that you do not want to testify when I call your name, you can merely pass to the next witness. Also once you finish testifying or if you are just here to observe, you may leave at any

1 time you wish.

2 The Board appreciates your participation  
3 in tonight's hearing, and we want everyone who wishes  
4 to make a public statement to have that opportunity.  
5 Please be considerate of others waiting and keep your  
6 statements to a reasonable time.

7 At this time I will begin calling  
8 witnesses forward. Gary Frye.

9 MR. FRYE: I'll pass at this time.

10 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, Mr. Frye.

11 Brandon Mattan.

12 MR. MAHAM: It's Maham, and I'm going to  
13 pass along with Jill. She's not here yet.

14 ALJ SCHABO: All right. Issy Beyer.

15 MS. BEYER: I'll pass at this time.

16 ALJ SCHABO: Okay. I cannot read this,  
17 State Route 286.

18 MS. ROWE: That might be Jackie Rowe.

19 ALJ SCHABO: I'm Sorry?

20 MS. ROWE: Jackie Rowe.

21 ALJ SCHABO: Yes.

22 MS. ROWE: I would like to speak. Do you  
23 want me to stand here?

24 ALJ SCHABO: Can you hear her?

25 You're fine standing there. If you would



1 just raise your hand.

2 - - -

3 JACKIE ROWE

4 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
5 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 THE WITNESS: Okay. I'm here to voice  
8 some concerns. First off, I'm very concerned about  
9 the health issues associated with solar panel farms.  
10 How much do we know about them? This is a long  
11 lease. Leakage is a concern of mine. What's it  
12 going to do to the ground? What's it going to do to  
13 our property value? What's it going to do as far as  
14 the health risks to children who are in the area?

15 Those are my main concerns and I would  
16 also like to thank those of you who did not sign up  
17 for this. I greatly appreciate that very much. Will  
18 there be fencing around it? Who is going to maintain  
19 it? And the company that is coming in, how long have  
20 they been in business? Do we know how long solar  
21 panel farms -- I mean, do we know -- do we have  
22 longevity on how -- on the risk factor associated  
23 with this?

24 Okay. Thank you.

25 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. And actually I

1 forgot to ask you would you state and spell your name  
2 and address for the record.

3 THE WITNESS: My name is Jackie,  
4 J-A-C-K-I-E, Rowe, R-O-W-E. My address is 4595 State  
5 Route 286, that's Mt. Orab.

6 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

7 Mr. Settineri, do you have any questions?

8 MR. SETTINERI: No, thank you.

9 ALJ SCHABO: Great. Thank you. Thank  
10 you very much.

11 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

12 ALJ SCHABO: Cheryl Torey? Toney? Is it  
13 Toney or Torey?

14 MS. TONEY: Toney, yes.

15 ALJ SCHABO: Toney, okay. Wonderful.  
16 Would you please raise your right hand.

17 - - -

18 CHERYL TONEY  
19 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
20 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION

22 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. If you could  
23 also please state your name and address for the  
24 record.

25 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry?

1 ALJ SCHABO: If you could state your name  
2 and address for the record.

3 THE WITNESS: Cheryl Toney, 16011 Moon  
4 Road, Mt. Orab, 45154.

5 ALJ SCHABO: Whenever you're ready.

6 THE WITNESS: Go ahead?

7 ALJ SCHABO: Yeah.

8 THE WITNESS: I put it into a one-page  
9 report, if that's okay.

10 ALJ SCHABO: Absolutely.

11 THE WITNESS: There's many of you sitting  
12 here today that are going to profit from the  
13 installation of the solar panels coming to our  
14 neighborhood. There are the landowners that are  
15 going to make a profit, the county that collects  
16 taxes, have government subsidies, and, of course, the  
17 solar panel companies.

18 Over the course of the last year, I've  
19 done some investigation to try to make some sense out  
20 of the need for the solar panels, particularly in our  
21 house laced community. And so I tried to console  
22 myself by searching for the positives to make the  
23 situation more palatable, especially for those of us  
24 that have no choice in the matter. Some of the  
25 things I found were the fact that we would not have

1 to deal with farm negatives such as dirt, chemicals,  
2 noise as the farmer sow and reap their fields.  
3 Communities will not develop which would bring  
4 increased traffic, people, et cetera, school buses,  
5 children. Since there is no zoning there would be no  
6 chance of pig farms or auto junkyards. But these are  
7 some farfetched scenarios in my mind.

8 I understand the importance of the need  
9 for alternative power sources, but on the other side  
10 of the coin, there has to be someone that will stand  
11 up and speak about the fact that there is a downside  
12 for those of us who did not have a choice. So not  
13 only with words from my heart but from those elderly  
14 neighbors of mine who have expressed to me their  
15 thoughts and how they feel that their hands are tied,  
16 that their time is short here on earth, and they just  
17 have to tolerate it, and I'm going to be their voice.

18 So for those of us who will not profit  
19 financially from this, we're the losers. Our  
20 farmers, who will lose their right to sustainable  
21 income, will be the losers. We will lose the right  
22 to hunt on our land for fear we will hit a solar  
23 panel and be held responsible. We lose the right to  
24 sit on our front porches and look over the beautiful  
25 fields of green and gold. We lose the right for our

1 children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy the  
2 pleasures that we have. We lose the right to make a  
3 profit on land or our home when and if we decide to  
4 sell. Who wants to live among fields of steel?

5 But most of all we lose the right to just  
6 be folks who live in the country where an abundance  
7 of nature still exists, where you can still watch the  
8 beautiful fields of soybean and corn grow and change  
9 colors with the seasons. We moved here 17 years ago  
10 from Cincinnati to enjoy the country, and now we feel  
11 forced to make a move that was not in our near  
12 future. We're quite saddened by the whole situation.  
13 We are the losers, and we oppose the solar farms  
14 coming to our neighborhood. Let's think about  
15 installing these panels on building tops where our  
16 precious land can still reap the crops it was meant  
17 for so our farmers can still make a good living.  
18 We're in a better position to grow crops than many  
19 countries. But if we lose our farmland, we're going  
20 to find ourselves dependent on other countries for  
21 our food supply in the future.

22 Sincerely, Cheryl and Sid Toney.

23 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

24 Mr. Settineri.

25 MR. SETTINERI: No.

1 ALJ SCHABO: If you would like to leave a  
2 copy of your written statement --

3 THE WITNESS: I do.

4 ALJ SCHABO: -- for the court reporter,  
5 that would be great. Thank you for your testimony.

6 Darlene Jones.

7 MS. JONES: I don't have too much to say  
8 because there is still a lot to be found out, but  
9 I've lived here all my life, and I considered the  
10 pros and cons.

11 ALJ SCHABO: Ma'am, could I ask you to  
12 stop and come a little bit further so I can hear you.  
13 And then before you give your comment if I could go  
14 ahead and swear you in. Thank you.

15 - - -

16 DARLENE JONES  
17 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
18 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 DIRECT EXAMINATION

20 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. Then if you  
21 could spell your name and give us your address.

22 THE WITNESS: Darlene Jones, 16618 Moon  
23 Road.

24 ALJ SCHABO: Wonderful. Thank you.

25 THE WITNESS: And basically I just want

1 to say we considered the pros and cons. And I've  
2 lived here. My family has been from Moon Road since  
3 back in the '30s. And it's going to make a  
4 difference between my family and its future. Yeah,  
5 we could keep farm ground to farm with. This is  
6 going to be more profitable. And I know nothing but  
7 that farmland. I worked in the factory within a  
8 mile's radius for 60 some years.

9 Yeah, I'm giving up what she's talking  
10 about. Me and my husband, we're from the area all  
11 our life, year apart in age. We want -- we are in  
12 support of this. All -- it all comes down to we're  
13 in favor. So I don't know. Everybody's got to make  
14 their own judgment. And that's what it boils down  
15 to.

16 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

17 Mr. Settineri?

18 MR. SETTINERI: No.

19 ALJ SCHABO: Kelly Cole.

20 MS. COLE: Yes.

21 ALJ SCHABO: Could you either speak up or  
22 come forward?

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KELLY COLE

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

ALJ SCHABO: Again, your name and your  
address for the record.

THE WITNESS: Kelly Cole, K-E-L-L-Y  
C-O-L-E. My address is 2865 Eden Road, Hamersville,  
Ohio.

My name is Kelly Cole. I work for the  
Brown County Commissioners, Board of Commissioners,  
and I work in development, both economic and  
community development. And we have had the  
opportunity to meet with Doug Herling from Open  
Renewables Solar multiple times over the last several  
months.

We are in support of the project because  
of the construction jobs that it will bring, also the  
permanent positions it will bring, and the  
possibility of some of the local manufacturers being  
able to create some of the components -- some of the  
structures for the solar panels and also pleased that  
we might have the opportunity to have a clean energy  
facility here in Brown County.

ALJ SCHABO: Mr. Settineri?



1 MR. SETTINERI: No.

2 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, Ms. Cole.

3 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry?

4 ALJ SCHABO: Just thank you.

5 Daryll Gray.

6 MR. GRAY: That's me.

7 ALJ SCHABO: Wonderful. Would you like  
8 to testify?

9 MR. GRAY: Yes.

10 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

11 - - -

12 DARYLL GRAY

13 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
14 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you again. Your name  
17 and address, please.

18 THE WITNESS: Daryll Gray, D-A-R-Y-L-L.  
19 You need my address? 43 Wahl Street, Georgetown,  
20 Ohio. I'm one of the county commissioners. I'm here  
21 to represent the Brown County Board of Commissioners  
22 and to express our support for the Hillcrest solar  
23 project.

24 We have met with Mr. Herling over the  
25 last several months and are excited that Brown County

1 will be the home of one of the first solar farms in  
2 Ohio. We are pleased to be part of the green energy  
3 production. That's it.

4 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

5 MR. SETTINERI: No.

6 ALJ SCHABO: Those are the names I have  
7 written down. I will go back to the top, and we  
8 offer the opportunity to testify to those of you who  
9 passed. At that time I will also just kind of open  
10 the floor to anyone that has decided in the meantime  
11 they would also like to testify.

12 Gary Frye?

13 MR. FRYE: I'll pass again.

14 ALJ SCHABO: Brandon Maham?

15 MR. MAHAM: I am Brandon Maham.

16 - - -

17 BRANDON MAHAM

18 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
19 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 THE WITNESS: Brandon Maham,  
22 B-R-A-N-D-O-N M-A-H-A-M, 15827 Moon Road. I along  
23 with Cheryl strongly oppose this. Right now, I can  
24 look out my backdoor, and I can look out my front  
25 door. I can see crops. I can see deer. I can see

wildlife. That's why I live out here. I don't live out here to look out across the field to see somebody benefiting from solar panels.

I moved -- I lived out here my whole life. And it's -- this is what it is. This is what it's about being in part of a small town. Yes, it's growing, but I own land out here that's going to suffer. Again, if I sell, who wants to live beside a daggone solar panel? Who wants to look out their backdoor, side door and see solar panels? I'm not going to go on circles with it, but I strongly oppose it.

ALJ SCHABO: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Issy Beyer.

MS. BEYER: I'm not going to pass. I'm going to speak this time.

- - -

ISSY BEYER

presented herself as a public witness, and being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

ALJ SCHABO: Again, name and address, please.

THE WITNESS: Issy Beyer, I-S-S-Y

1 B-E-Y-E-R, 3991 State Route 286, Mt. Orab, Ohio. I'm  
2 a young property owner. I am not very happy with  
3 this going in across the street from my house. I  
4 bought my house with the intention of living there  
5 for a long time with having crops across the street  
6 from me. They alternate beans and corn every year.

7 I love the fact I have deer that come to  
8 my yard from them, turkeys, everything else that I  
9 can watch, all kinds of wildlife. I don't want to  
10 live anywhere else.

11 But with this solar farm coming in, I  
12 will no longer have that availability to look out my  
13 front yard and see all kinds of wildlife. That's my  
14 biggest problem with this. What's going to happen  
15 with all the wildlife? Thank you.

16 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. Those are the  
17 names that have signed up. If there is anyone  
18 present that would like to provide testimony that did  
19 not have the opportunity to sign up or passed and has  
20 decided to give testimony, just raise your hand.  
21 I'll call on you, and we will start the process.

22 MS. ROWE: Can I speak one more time?

23 ALJ SCHABO: Yes.

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JACKIE ROWE

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
previously duly sworn, testified further as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION (Continued)

THE WITNESS: All right. I'm Jackie  
Rowe, and I do swear.

ALJ SCHABO: You are still under oath.

THE WITNESS: I just want to say that I  
do strongly oppose it, and I want that on the record.  
And I would -- you know, I hear several people say  
they are for it, but I also hear that your addresses  
are not anywhere near the solar panel farms, okay?

So what I would like to ask I would like  
to propose those of you -- the company that's  
bringing this solar panel farm in, would you want  
this in your community? Would you want to live next  
to this? Those of you who are strongly for it, I  
also ask you the very same thing. Would this be  
something you would want to raise your children  
beside or to live beside or to look out your window  
and see?

When we moved here, there was very strong  
zoning. We moved from Milford 26 years ago, was  
thrilled to move out in the country. The zoning went  
away; and, now, you know, we've been faced with other

1 things. But now this, and I'm heartbroke. I'm  
2 heartbroke. I love this community. I love where we  
3 live, and I love our neighbors. I'm just so  
4 saddened, so saddened that the all mighty dollar  
5 ruled in this and the entity came in and in my  
6 opinion exploited our community, went door to door  
7 secretively and asked people if you would be  
8 interested and offered them an extravagant amount of  
9 money to do this.

10 I just hope and pray that this entity  
11 that is coming in is strong enough to maintain this  
12 solar panel farm that they are intending. Have they  
13 ever done a 2,100 acre? Have they ever maintained  
14 this? I mean, what are we getting into? And 20  
15 years down the road are we going to have broken  
16 panels here and there and grass growing underneath  
17 these solar panels? What's it going to look like?  
18 What's it going to do to our property value and our  
19 health?

20 So thank you so much for letting me speak  
21 again.

22 ALJ SCHABO: Jill Maham. I'm sorry. I  
23 missed your name. If you would like to speak.

24 (Witness sworn.)

25 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

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JILL MAHAM

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

THE WITNESS: It's Jill Maham, M-A-H-A-M.  
Address is 15827 Moon Road.

I think Jackie probably hit it right on  
the head there, none of the people that are for this  
project live in this project. And like she said,  
they all went door to door, and we were voted out  
with it after it's all said and done pretty much.

We've contacted them. We're concerned  
about if the project proceeds forward, they've  
promised foliage, but nobody has put that in writing.  
We plan to sell our property when our children are  
out of school. What's that going to do to our  
property values? I don't want to look out my  
backdoor and see solar panels just like everybody  
else. They want to see the wildlife. That's why  
we're all here. That's why we all live where we  
live. And just as they said, everybody that's for it  
doesn't live in it so.

That's pretty much what I have to say.

ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

Anybody else? Sir.

1 MR. BEYER: My name is Benjamin Beyer,  
2 B-E-N-J-A-M-I-N B-E-Y-E-R.

3 (Witness sworn.)

4 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

5 - - -

6 BENJAMIN BEYER

7 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
8 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 THE WITNESS: I live 3991 State Route  
11 286. I am going to live directly across from the  
12 solar panels. Every morning I'm going to have to  
13 walk out my front door and see barbed wire fence and  
14 these panels.

15 I've lived out here my whole life for a  
16 reason and that's just to have peace and quiet, see  
17 the trees, the fields, and I don't want construction  
18 going on two years in front of my house and then have  
19 to look at chain link fence and barbed wire and these  
20 stupid panels so. Sorry. Thank you.

21 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

22 Anyone else? Ma'am.

23 MS. RICHMOND: My name is Tina Richmond.

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TINA RICHMOND

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

THE WITNESS: Tina Richmond, 4550 Mount  
Road, Mount Orab, Ohio.

I strongly disagree with this as well. I  
agree with everything that the people have said, the  
ones that are in agreeance to it aren't going to have  
to look at it every day. Where my property sets  
these solar panels are going to totally engulf me,  
the sides of me, behind me. My whole house is going  
to be surrounded by them, and I am heartbroken about  
it because like the nature issues, that's why we  
moved out here.

I've lived out there for 29 years and it  
saddens me and I'm very upset about it and I totally  
disagree with it and I'm hoping -- I don't know that  
it's going to matter what our opinions are, but I  
hope that they are taken into consideration because I  
don't want these right next to me. They are going to  
be within feet of my house basically. And I have  
fear of health, health issues, wildlife issues, I  
mean, the whole thing. I mean, it really saddens me.  
Thank you.

1           ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. We are going to  
2 go ahead and take about a 10-minute break. If after  
3 that break we have anybody else who would like to  
4 provide testimony, we'll take it. If after that  
5 break there is not that interest, we will go ahead  
6 and adjourn. But for now we will go off the record  
7 for about 10 minutes. Thank you.

8           (Recess taken.)

9           ALJ SCHABO: Back on the record.  
10 We are back on the record at our local  
11 public hearing, and I have Mr. Gary Frye.

12          MR. FRYE: Yes.

13                   - - -

14                   GARY FRYE  
15 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
16 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

17                   DIRECT EXAMINATION

18           THE WITNESS: My name is Gary, G-A-R-Y,  
19 middle initial R, last name Frye, F-R-Y-E. I live at  
20 17492 U.S. 68, Mt. Orab. I'm on the township  
21 trustees. I am not speaking on behalf of the  
22 trustees, but as the trustee, I have a concern I  
23 would like to voice and that is the public road  
24 situation and the ditches. What's going to happen to  
25 them? As property owners when you sign up for this,

1 you're responsible for any damage done to the ditch  
2 and the culvert. The township will not replace them  
3 at the township's cost. If you won't replace it, if  
4 the construction company won't replace it, we will  
5 replace it, and we will put it on your tax lien.

6 You need to be aware of that. There  
7 still could be some issues that's going to cost you  
8 money. I'm talking about public roadways now. I'm  
9 not talking about a driveway. If you build a culvert  
10 across a ditch, through a ditch from the public  
11 roadway to private land, that is your culvert, not  
12 the political entity that owns the road. So keep  
13 that in mind. There's some concerns there.

14 For all of you that own property and live  
15 north of Mt. Orab, we already have a drainage  
16 problem, have had for years. I personally don't  
17 think these solar panels are going to help it. I  
18 think they are going to add to the problem. But  
19 that's my personal opinion.

20 I just want you to be aware of the roads  
21 and the driveway culverts. Thank you.

22 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

23 That is everyone that has signed up. Is  
24 there anyone that would like to add their testimony?  
25 Sir.

1 MR. HAWK: Howard Hawk.

2 - - -

3 HOWARD HAWK

4 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
5 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 THE WITNESS: One thing nobody brought  
8 out, talking about health issues, the solar panels,  
9 Western Brown has got a whole field of them right out  
10 there at the school. Nobody is complaining about  
11 that.

12 And another issue is nobody is taking  
13 into consideration the revenue that this is going to  
14 bring in tax money for school districts, the county,  
15 how it's going to help the community. And nobody,  
16 you know, is stating anything about that. I haven't  
17 heard anybody complain about solar panels or object  
18 to the solar panels. Yet here the concern is about  
19 the health of their kids. They are not -- you know,  
20 nobody has mentioned it or complained about the solar  
21 panels there, so I don't see the issue about having  
22 the solar farm. Thank you.

23 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. Sir, if you  
24 could give your address.

25 THE WITNESS: 3471 Beltz Road, Sardinia,

1 Ohio.

2 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

3 THE WITNESS: I live -- my address is  
4 Sardinia, but I live right out State Route 286.

5 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, sir.

6 Anyone else?

7 - - -

8 DARLENE JONES

9 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
10 previously duly sworn, testified further as follows:

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION (Continued)

12 THE WITNESS: I want to say on behalf of  
13 the people that have lived here forever like myself,  
14 and there's others, they are aware that there is pros  
15 and cons. They are aware, yeah, it might -- I don't  
16 think that we know that it's going to -- there's been  
17 no proof for that. I do know it's a lot better than  
18 wind farms. Wind power things catch on fire, cause a  
19 lot of smoke, a lot of noise, so with solar I'm more  
20 comfortable with it.

21 Yeah, it's going to provide us income.  
22 It's not, oh, give me my check, tough for the rest of  
23 you. It's not like that. We're hoping that it's a  
24 good way for the future. There's going to be  
25 progress in this area whether you like it or not.

1 Our road, Moon Road, I can remember when there was  
2 seven houses on the whole road. It's 10 miles long.  
3 And you go down it now and see how many houses are on  
4 it, how much progress, and this will maybe in a way  
5 stop some of that progress.

6 I mean, like I said, I was raised on Moon  
7 and raised in that area. There was probably people  
8 when the zoning went out -- came in and went out that  
9 didn't want all them trailers down the road. But  
10 it's progress. You have to accept what comes along.  
11 You can't stop people from doing it on their  
12 property.

13 And I think just my final statement is  
14 don't pass judgment on those who do go for it  
15 thinking we're greedy people going to accept a check  
16 at the cost of others. That's not our goal.

17 And also we would like to see what kind  
18 of aesthetic. You know, are you going to plant the  
19 trees around it? Are you going to maintain, keep the  
20 grass mowed or whatever? I don't think we need to be  
21 concerned about that. I'm concerned about it, so I  
22 would still like to know more what exactly.

23 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. I know that you  
24 spoke earlier as well but if you could just say your  
25 name again.

1 THE WITNESS: Darlene Jones.

2 ALJ SCHABO: Darlene Jones. Okay. Thank  
3 you. It's for the record.

4 Okay. I'll offer it -- I've got a new  
5 hand.

6 MS. HAWK: My name is Karen Hawk.

7 ALJ SCHABO: Okay. Ms. Hawk.

8 - - -

9 KAREN HAWK

10 presented herself as a public witness, and being  
11 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 DIRECT EXAMINATION

13 THE WITNESS: I've lived there 47 years.  
14 I swear that everything I say is the truth.

15 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

16 THE WITNESS: I am 100 percent for the  
17 solar. Solar has been around for years, and nobody  
18 has died from it yet. No. 2, they are going to have  
19 fence around it, so the livestock or wildlife is not  
20 going to get killed. If so, all these towers that's  
21 coming up in our vicinity, nobody is mad about that.  
22 I haven't heard a stink about it at all.

23 My concern is -- with our farm is the  
24 people that trespass to hunt without asking, dump  
25 their mattresses, their shingles, their anything they

1 tear down, their old T.V.s. We have got all kinds of  
2 things.

3 There is 1 percent of farmers in the  
4 United States. We don't make or grow all the food in  
5 this country. It comes in from a lot of countries.  
6 We do not get a lot of help from the government, so  
7 we need this help. Now, if you want to sit out on  
8 your porch and look at the livestock while the  
9 farmers slowly decrease and we have no food, vote  
10 against it. I'm 100 percent for it. Thank you.

11 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you. If you would  
12 state your address as well.

13 THE WITNESS: 3471 Beltz, B-E-L-T-Z,  
14 Road, Sardinia, Ohio 45171. And, please, people,  
15 don't come and bomb my house. Thank you.

16 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, ma'am.

17 Yes, sir.

18 MR. PARR: Jason Parr.

19 - - -

20 JASON PARR

21 presented himself as a public witness, and being  
22 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 DIRECT EXAMINATION

24 THE WITNESS: I actually live in  
25 Cincinnati, Ohio, but I represent dozens of workers



1 that live in Brown County because of the country and  
 2 how beautiful it is and the wildlife. They have to  
 3 commute an hour every day for most of the work. It's  
 4 closer to Cincinnati. It's just the way it is. I  
 5 think I would like to see some type of agreement to  
 6 hire locally from Brown County, Clermont County.  
 7 Since there is 644 construction jobs where is this  
 8 workforce going to come from? You know, is there an  
 9 incentive to hire locally and, you know, get guys,  
 10 good skilled, you know, work that's going to last and  
 11 pay well and help out the community so they can get  
 12 back to the community, not just everybody coming in  
 13 from out of town? So that's just my opinion on it.

14 And, I mean, solar panels are coming.  
 15 We've all seen the news and different countries that  
 16 are well ahead of what we are. I don't think we are  
 17 going to be able to stop it, but if we can grow with  
 18 the industry and help communities and get guys good  
 19 jobs, I think that's important. Thank you.

20 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

21 One more opportunity. Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. HAWK: Melanie Hawk, M-E-L-A-N-I-E  
 23 H-A-W-K, address 838 Greenbush Road, Sardinia, Ohio.

24 (Witness sworn.)

25 ALJ SCHABO: Thank you, Ms. Hawk.

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MELANIE HAWK

presented herself as a public witness, and being  
first duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

THE WITNESS: As most of you know, the  
solar panels that have been up for grabs is here  
tonight that brings us all together. I am a farmer.  
I am a farmer's daughter. I am a farmer's wife. And  
I'm a farmher.

I understand the risks involved. I've  
done my homework. When we were first approached, it  
took us a while to say whether, hey, this is great.  
You know, this is a strong amount of money they've  
offered. Yeah, it's too good to be true. That was  
our thoughts.

We did our homework. We contracted  
lawyers. We made sure that our ground was protected.  
I think we have a lot at stake. Yes, we have a huge  
investment on there. If you look around this room,  
we're probably some of the youngest farmers  
represented here in this room. We had to do our  
homework because we will see the end of this project.  
We wanted to know. We wanted to make sure. We  
wanted to cover our investment to make sure that we  
still had a legacy to give to our children. We

1 wanted to make sure that the solar company when they  
2 come in they didn't destroy our fields. They  
3 couldn't just walk out of here five years from now  
4 and leave us with a pile of rubbish. Trust me, I  
5 wouldn't have signed because I don't want the cost  
6 incurred to clean that mess up so that we can  
7 continue our livelihood.

8 I come from a family that come over here  
9 in the States in the 1800s and that's what we've done  
10 all of our life from generation to generation, five  
11 generations here in the States. We've all been  
12 farmers. It's in my blood, all the sweat and the  
13 tears that we put in.

14 I understand we're giving up our hunting  
15 ground. My boys just killed three -- three deers  
16 during youth season. That is a big part of our -- of  
17 who we are and we understand that we are going to  
18 give that up, that those animals are going to go to  
19 neighboring farmers. Yea you guys that don't have  
20 farm ground or your land up in this because that's  
21 where those animals and those wildlife is going to go  
22 to.

23 And also I'm a firm believer in shopping  
24 local, shopping small. Yes, that income will be  
25 nice. We'll be able to pay off our debts a lot

1 faster. We'll be able to pay back. We will then be  
2 able to grow. That was our plan. We pay off for the  
3 farm ground that we own now, and we'll go buy some  
4 more dirt to play in. That was the open running joke  
5 for my husband and I. It's in our blood. It's who  
6 we are. We are not going to stop farming.

7 However, I know that this project will  
8 generate I think the magic number that's stated in  
9 the reports is \$875,000 in tax revenue. Green  
10 Township and the school district will fight over  
11 that. I was in contact with the Western Brown School  
12 District Treasurer an hour before this meeting. They  
13 will go in and they will probably get 80 percent of  
14 that. Green Township will get the other 20 if this  
15 all goes through. That's \$125,000 for road repairs a  
16 year to that township and that's another \$700,000 to  
17 that school district a year for 40 years that they  
18 will be able to benefit.

19 I'm not concerned about the health risks  
20 that the solar panels bring in because we've done our  
21 research there. And like Mr. Hawk back here, if it  
22 was such a risk, why are our school districts  
23 benefiting from them financially and putting them at  
24 the back where we send our children every day five  
25 days a week for 620 hours a year?

1                   ALJ SCHABO: Thank you.

2                   Seeing no one else, I would like to thank  
3 everyone for coming here this evening. This will  
4 conclude this evening's public hearing. And it will  
5 be submitted to the record for the Board's  
6 consideration in this case.

7                   Staff and I will be here for a little bit  
8 longer in case you have any questions about the Board  
9 process or how to file additional comments in the  
10 case.

11                   Thank you very much. Have a very nice  
12 evening.

13                   (Thereupon, at 7:29 p.m., the public  
14 hearing was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is  
a true and correct transcript of the proceedings  
taken by me in this matter on Thursday, November 30,  
2017, and carefully compared with my original  
stenographic notes.

*Karen Sue Gibson*

Karen Sue Gibson, Registered  
Merit Reporter.

(KSG-6460)

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**Case No(s). 17-1152-EL-BGN**

Summary: Transcript In the Matter of the Application of Hillcrest Solar I, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need to Construct an Electric Generation Facility in Green Township, Brown County, Ohio, hearing held on November 30, 2017. electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Gibson, Karen Sue Mrs.