

THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

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In the Matter of the :
 Application of Hecate :
 Energy Highland, LLC, for a :
 Certificate of : Case No. 18-1334-EL-BGN
 Environmental Compatibility:
 and Public Need for :
 an Electric Generating :
 Facility in Morwystown, :
 Highland County. :

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PROCEEDINGS

Before Mr. Nicholas J. Walstra, Administrative Law
 Judge, at the White Oak High School, 44 North High
 Street, Mowrystown, Ohio, called at 6:00 p.m. on
 Tuesday, March 19, 2019.

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PUBLIC HEARING - MOWRYSTOWN, OHIO

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APPEARANCES:

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On behalf of the Staff of Hecate Energy
Highland, LLC.

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1 Tuesday Evening Session,
 2 March 19, 2019.

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4 ALJ WALSTRA: The Ohio Power Siting
 5 Board has assigned for public hearing Case No.
 6 18-1334-EL-BGN, being captioned In the Matter of the
 7 Application of Hecate Energy Highland, LLC, for a
 8 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public
 9 Need for an Electric Generating Facility in
 10 Mowrystown, Highland County.

11 My name is Nick Walstra, and I'm the
 12 Administrative Law Judge assigned by the Ohio Power
 13 Siting Board to hear this case. There's another
 14 Staff member, Rob Holderbaum, in the hallway.

15 At this point we'll take appearances of
 16 the parties in this case. On behalf of Hecate.

17 MS. WINTERS: Karen Winters from Squire,
 18 Patton, Boggs. I'm the attorney for Hecate Energy
 19 Highland, LLC, which is the Applicant in this case,
 20 and with me this evening is Patty Shore, Director of
 21 Development, Dr. Paul Turner is in the back, and
 22 Jared Wren, a Development Associate, is also here.

23 And we understand that the format is not
 24 a Q and A session, but we wanted to make sure that
 25 you knew we would be here after the public hearing to

1 answer any necessary questions for those who still
2 have questions. Thank you.

3 ALJ WALSTRA: A representative from the
4 Ohio Farm Bureau.

5 MR. ARNOLD: Thank you, your Honor. My
6 name is Dale Arnold, I'm Director of Energy Utility
7 and Local Government Policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau,
8 P.O. Box 182383, Columbus, 43218, and that's also 280
9 North High Street. We're a party of record in this
10 case and I'm here to observe. Thank you.

11 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. The subject of
12 today's hearing is limited to the application filed
13 by Hecate on October 9, 2018. The Company is seeking
14 to construct a 300-megawatt solar-powered generating
15 facility in Highland County. The project will occupy
16 over 1,900 acres within a 3,400 acre project area.

17 The Power Siting Board Staff filed a
18 report in this case on March 4, 2019, and after
19 conducting an investigation and a review, the Staff
20 gave a recommendation to allow Hecate to go forward,
21 subject to 28 conditions.

22 Staff's report serves merely as a
23 recommendation to the Board, but the Board still has
24 the final decision, and will consider all the
25 evidence, including the testimonies heard here today.

1 An evidentiary hearing is scheduled for
2 March 26, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. at the Board's office
3 in Columbus.

4 Hecate's application, and the Staff's
5 recommendation, are all available on the Power Siting
6 website under the case number, which is 18-1334.

7 As discussed, the purpose of this
8 hearing is to receive comments from you regarding the
9 application. This is not a question and answer
10 session, but it's your opportunity to let the Power
11 Siting Board know what you think about the proposal.

12 There is a Court Reporter here, and
13 everything said today will be transcribed and filed
14 in the docket for this case, and the Board will
15 review the comments before making a final decision.

16 If you have written comments, if you
17 typed them out, if you can share them with the Court
18 Reporter. That makes it a lot easier to make sure
19 that your words get transcribed correctly.

20 Those wishing to speak have hopefully
21 put their names down on a sign-up sheet. I will call
22 those names forward, I'll swear you in, and then
23 please state your name, address, and give your
24 testimony.

25 We do seem to have quite a few names

1 built up, so just be respectful of everyone's time.
2 We only have a couple hours here. Hopefully it
3 doesn't last too long, but I do want to make sure
4 everyone has a chance to be heard.

5 At this point we'll start with the first
6 name. Mr. Flick Young. Raise your right hand. Do
7 you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth?

8 MR. YOUNG: Yes.

9 Flick Young,
10 presented himself as a public witness, and being
11 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 DIRECT TESTIMONY

13 ALJ WALSTRA: State your name, and go
14 ahead.

15 MR. YOUNG: Flick Young. I don't know
16 whether all you people know me or not, but I've been
17 in this community for over 65 years of my 70 years.
18 I've been involved in several projects overseas, and
19 I am really concerned about what is taking place here
20 as far as not letting all the people know the entire
21 amount of the project, and how it's going.

22 And my question is, I would like to know
23 why we can't have a six-month extension to be able to
24 let more people express their opinions, and be made
25 aware of what's going on, because this is going to be

1 something that's going to have an effect on our kids,
2 our grand kids, and the future.

3 As far as I know, there's not any other
4 projects much bigger in this area to even compare
5 with.

6 I also have another concern of the
7 drainage situation, and erosion and runoff, and I
8 think it's going to be a real concern. And I'd like
9 to know who is in charge of all these projects and
10 where they come up with their ways of draining and
11 taking care of this project later, and who is going
12 to be in charge of it.

13 This is a new entity in this area, and I
14 think the people of the community -- this is a loving
15 and caring community. We don't want to have problems
16 with friends and our neighbors, and I think that we
17 need to have a short reprieve period of time, because
18 I keep finding out more information every day that I
19 was not aware of.

20 And for us just to go and say we're
21 going to rush out, we're not in where there's no
22 right to get up and speak. We're not Nancy Pelosi
23 that brought up the Obama bill who said just sign it
24 and read it later. I think everyone needs to be
25 aware in advance of what's taking place here. And I

1 don't see why we couldn't have a six-month reprieve
2 to do that.

3 I mean, I don't think anybody is in that
4 big of a hurry where we can't make more exposure to
5 the people, because each day we talk to somebody that
6 does not know what's going on here. I was not even
7 aware of this until four weeks ago, and I live within
8 a mile of here. I've lived within two miles of this
9 project all my life.

10 So I thank you for your time. I think
11 one thing we need to do is have Bill Fawley come
12 forth and explain what the tax status is. I think a
13 lot of people is not aware of what the tax status is
14 and what taxes it's going to bring into schools, and
15 when it's going to bring them in. So I thank you
16 very much for your time.

17 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Jay Clutter.
18 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
19 truth, the whole truth?

20 MR. CLUTTER: I do.

21 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

22 Jay Clutter,
23 presented himself as a public witness, and being
24 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

25 DIRECT TESTIMONY

1 MR. CLUTTER: My name is Jay Clutter.
2 Selling to Hecate Energy has been the most difficult
3 decision my wife and I have ever had to make. Let me
4 give you some history of the farm.

5 The farm was established in 1823 when my
6 Great Great Grandfather Reedy bought land and settled
7 at the corner of New Market Road and State Route 138.
8 He had several children. One of those is my great
9 grandmother. She married Dan Rhoads. They bought
10 land from Reedy and started a farm of their own.

11 She and Dan Rhoads had several children
12 of their own, and one of them was my grandmother, and
13 she married WW Mock. In 1900 they bought 55 acres
14 and started a family of their own on some of the
15 original Reedy farm.

16 WW Mock kept buying land up until the
17 depression, acquiring a total of 206 acres. WW Mock
18 had two children; his son was killed in 1929, and his
19 daughter, Thelma, who married my father, Lawrence, in
20 1941.

21 The 206-acre farm passed to my mother in
22 1955 when my grandfather passed away. In 1957 we
23 bought a 125-acre stock farm about five miles east of
24 Hillsboro, next to the Highland County Coon Hunters
25 Association.

1 In 1960 we sold 125 acres and bought 185
2 acres that bordered the home farm. This was my first
3 experience in buying land. I was 16 years old.

4 My father told me that since my brother
5 left the farm for vet school, he wanted me to stay on
6 and farm with him. He told me that if I help work
7 the land and pay for it, that some day I would
8 inherit the farm.

9 The following year, 1961, I graduated
10 from high school at the age of 17, and went to
11 farming full-time with my father. We milked cows and
12 raised grain.

13 In 1963 I bought 198 acres close to the
14 home farm, which began my lifetime work in farming.
15 I never imagined that a decision I made at 16 years
16 of age could affect my life the way it did.

17 In January 1972, I married Margaret
18 Nale, a school teacher from Clarksville, Tennessee.
19 In April we bought the Dave Crawford farm, which
20 consisted of 132 acres.

21 The Crawford farm is two miles northwest
22 of Buford, about five miles from home. In 1975 we
23 bought the Dallas Young farm and the Dan Rhoads farm
24 that laid between the home farm and the land that I
25 had previously purchased, adding another 180 acres to

1 the farm.

2 In 1975 we also started our family, and
3 the first of our three children was born. My wife
4 and I wanted to buy a neighboring farm, so we sold
5 the Crawford farm and bought Milard Purdy's farm,
6 which was 186 acres.

7 Around 2000 we bought an additional ten
8 acres from Shane Wilkin, which brought our total to
9 over 900 acres.

10 When Hecate came to us with a proposal
11 to do a solar farm, we knew we had some big decisions
12 to make. I have been reading articles in the farm
13 magazines about solar farming and how ecologically
14 beneficial this is for the land and the insects,
15 mainly the honey bees.

16 No longer would hundreds of tons of
17 fertilizers, thousand of gallons of 28 percent
18 nitrogen, four sprayings of herbicides, two sprayings
19 of insecticides, be needed yearly on the farm, making
20 it more ecologically friendly.

21 Also, by sowing in grass and wild
22 flowers, erosion and water runoff would be
23 controlled, and the flooding to my neighboring land
24 would not be of concern. The wild flowers would also
25 attract the honey bees.

1 Solar farming would bring in
2 approximately \$2.1 million in new taxes, and over 100
3 new jobs. The current tax base brings in
4 approximately \$126,000. This would be a huge
5 financial gain for the local schools, and a community
6 tax break.

7 Hecate has done a lot of archeological
8 studies of the land, core samples every few acres,
9 clean water testing of old fuel sites, noise studies,
10 and traffic studies.

11 Hecate wanted to know how each of these
12 would impact the community. They even tested the
13 noise levels of the panels as they moved.

14 By selling to Hecate the farm can remain
15 productive in producing energy. No longer producing
16 corn for ethanol, or soybeans for biodiesel, the farm
17 would now produce solar power, which is a hundred
18 percent renewable energy.

19 It's, without a doubt, the most
20 difficult business decision I have had to make as a
21 farmer. I not only raised my children here, but I
22 lost both of my parents on this farm, survived
23 cancer, and helped raised my four grandchildren on
24 the farm as well.

25 I watched each of them learn to ride and

1 develop their love of horses, riding out across the
2 fields and back through the woods. Most of you also
3 watched my children and grandchildren grow up on this
4 farm, and in this community.

5 This is the only home I've ever known.
6 Now that we have reached our business decision, I
7 feel good about it, and I ask you to also consider
8 the solar project favorably. Respectively submitted,
9 Jay Clutter.

10 ALJ WALSTRA: Margaret Clutter. Raise
11 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
12 whole truth?

13 MS. CLUTTER: I do.

14 Margaret Clutter,
15 presented herself as a public witness, and being
16 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

17 DIRECT TESTIMONY

18 MS. CLUTTER: My name is Margaret
19 Clutter. My family is a part of the proposed solar
20 system project.

21 First of all, I'd like to welcome
22 everyone for coming tonight, the Judge and the
23 stenographer, and also the people in the audience.

24 I'd like to tell you about the part of
25 the history of the farm from the time that I married

1 Jay. He's given you the ancestry part, and I'd like
2 to tell you a little more about the present part of
3 the farm.

4 We were married January 8 of 1972, and I
5 moved to the farm at that time. Jay's mother had
6 passed away two years prior to us being married, and
7 so I moved in to the farmhouse with Jay and his dad.

8 In April of that year we purchased a
9 farm, which was the Dave Crawford farm. This was the
10 first piece of land that had my name on the deed, all
11 the rest of the land had belonged to Jay and his dad.

12 We made the payments for that farm out
13 of my teaching money, because it wasn't part of the
14 farm partnership between his dad. I felt so much
15 pride.

16 I was raised in the city, never lived on
17 a farm until I married Jay. But I've always had a
18 love for the land and the animals.

19 In the following fall of 1980, I took my
20 teaching job at Buford Elementary School. I had
21 previously taught for eight years in Lynchburg at the
22 high school, and six was in Belfast for Bright Local.
23 So I've been a teacher in two of the different school
24 districts that will be benefitting from this project
25 should it go through.

1 I love the land. I love seeing the
2 crops planted in the spring. We go out and dig with
3 a knife to see if the little corn sprouts are ready
4 to break through.

5 I love the harvest. I go out in the
6 field with my husband and ride on the outside of the
7 combine, because that was before we had the buddy
8 seats. I rode with some of my neighbors on the
9 outside of their combine. I'd take ice tea and sugar
10 waffles to the farmland neighbors when I went out to
11 take for my husband.

12 I know what it's like to lay awake at
13 night and listen to the rain, to listen to the hale,
14 to listen to the wind. I know what it's like to ride
15 my horse out in the field of crops and see hundreds
16 of grasshoppers eating the soybeans right before our
17 very eyes. I know what it's like to lay in bed at
18 night and wonder if we'll have money to pay the
19 bills.

20 My dad had a regular job with a fixed
21 income, so my parents knew at the beginning of each
22 month how much money they would be taking in, and how
23 much they had to spend on the bills.

24 For me, moving to the farm was like
25 playing Monopoly; you borrowed money from the bank in

1 the spring to put out the crop, and you hoped to make
2 enough to provide -- to pay off everything in the
3 fall.

4 I believe life on a family farm is the
5 very best place to raise children; I don't think
6 there's any better place in the world. I don't think
7 there's a better community than the one that I'm a
8 part of.

9 When I left Tennessee to move to Ohio, I
10 left all my friends, all my relatives. I showed up
11 on a Friday before school started on Monday, and I
12 was literally scared to death.

13 In the beginning the only friends that I
14 had were Jay's friends, but as I branched out into
15 the community through the church, through my job
16 teaching, I began to make my own friends. I've been
17 proud to be a part of the Buford community and
18 village school system.

19 Jay and I are fifth generation on the
20 farm, our children are sixth generation, and our
21 grandchildren are seventh generation. The land was
22 passed down for generations through the females,
23 through daughters.

24 Jay and I raised two sons. It was
25 always my dream that our farm would never be sold,

1 that one of our sons would farm and carry on the
2 Clutter family farm tradition.

3 In 2003, Jay was tested positive for
4 prostate cancer. This was a scary and difficult time
5 for our family. I still held on to the dream of my
6 boys farming. Due to Jay's illness, it became
7 increasingly more difficult for him to manage the
8 farm, even with the help of our two boys.

9 Jay and I thought our oldest son, Bill,
10 would take over the farm. And shortly after that,
11 our younger son, David, came to us and expressed his
12 desire to take over the farm. Jay and I discussed
13 it, and we realized that a family farm didn't make
14 enough money to support three families, Jay and I,
15 and our two sons.

16 We discussed this with our older son,
17 Bill, and we made the decision that rather than
18 chance a rift between our two sons, in the best
19 interest of our family we would rent the farm.

20 Even though we made that decision, we
21 didn't approach any of the local farmers about
22 renting our land. One day I came home from school
23 and Jay said to me that he rented the farm. I was
24 shocked.

25 It was an emotional day for me and for

1 Jay. Doug Carraher had come to our house earlier
2 that day while I was at school. He brought a
3 contract with him, and we signed it. This was a
4 difficult decision for us. I never envisioned the
5 farm ever being outside our family.

6 The day that I went to Doug Carraher's
7 house to sign the papers, I cried until my whole body
8 shook; not because Doug isn't a good, honest, and
9 fair man, because he is. I don't know a man in this
10 community that I look up to or respect more than I do
11 Doug Carraher as a farmer, as a family man, as a
12 neighbor, as an honest, decent human being.

13 That spring the Carrahers brought the
14 corn to our farm, and when I came home from school
15 that day, my husband was sitting in the dark in our
16 kitchen, and he said, "Margaret, I've had the most
17 difficult day to watch someone else come on our farm
18 to run the farm."

19 That decision being made, I can tell you
20 it's worked well for our family. Doug's lived up to
21 the commitments and the promises he's made, at times
22 going above and beyond. He's a neighbor that I know
23 if I need something, I pick up my phone, call, he'll
24 be there. Other members of the family -- of the
25 family have been the same way.

1 If I needed something, I look out and I
2 see a number of people here that I do call, and you'd
3 be at my house like that. I see people sitting in
4 this audience that I think of as close friends and
5 family, people that I've shared my dreams and my
6 heartbreaks, my successes, and a lot of down times on
7 the farm as you have crop failures and other things
8 that we all face.

9 In 2015, in that January, we were
10 sitting in the house and it started raining. We got
11 our pots and pans and took them out to our laundry
12 room. We set them out to catch leaks of the water
13 dripping.

14 My son Bill -- Bill's house -- he built
15 his house on 138, on part of the farmland, and I said
16 to him, "Bill, before spring we're going to have to
17 do something about that roof and the leaks." And he
18 said, "Mom, you know what?" He said, "Grandma
19 remodeled the house, great grandma remodeled the
20 house, you and dad remodeled the house," and he said,
21 "I think it's about time we had a new house."

22 The day Jay asked me to marry him, he
23 promised me a new house. Well, if you can imagine,
24 we were married in 1972, and it's now 2015. I had
25 long since given up the dream of ever having a new

1 house on our family farm.

2 A few months later we went forward with
3 the project. The people at the school said, "Are you
4 having a little house or a big house?" I said, "I'm
5 having a dream house." I waited a long time for it.

6 I moved into the house where his mother
7 had lived, where the furniture was hers, the things
8 in the china cabinet were hers. Her grandmother's
9 things were still there. My grandparents died living
10 in that house. Jay's mom and dad died living in that
11 house.

12 I love my dad with all my heart, and
13 when he died, I missed him. But when Lawrence
14 Clutter died, I had dinner at the table every night
15 and had to look at the empty chair.

16 When my children excelled with the
17 horses or in sports, I said to Jay, "Wouldn't grandpa
18 have loved to see that?" And I know he would.

19 The week before he died he said,
20 "Margaret, go out to the barn and get a horse and
21 bring it up to the window." I said, "Grandpa, which
22 horse do you want to see?" He said, "Doesn't make
23 any difference which one, just you pick one and bring
24 it up. I want to see a horse before I die."

25 The night he died, my husband and I were

1 with him, and his sister Harriet, who was staying and
2 helping. We all sat there by his bedside when he
3 took his last breath.

4 In 2016, Jay had back surgery. Somehow
5 in the process of that surgery they nicked his
6 gallbladder, and it became septic. Not knowing that
7 his gallbladder had been nicked, they sent him home
8 from the hospital, and one night he laid there curled
9 up in the fetal position in pain, asking God for
10 mercy.

11 I called the hospital and they said it
12 was expected to be the worst pain of his life, but
13 that seemed a little extreme to them, and if it was
14 worse, to call in the morning. During the night his
15 gallbladder ruptured. In the morning, the pain had
16 eased and so we didn't call.

17 By that night he had double pneumonia,
18 he was septic, running a high fever, and struggling.
19 I called my daughter to come over, and we called our
20 son to come to help us get him in the car to take him
21 to the hospital that night.

22 When we got there he was nearly dead.
23 The next morning we met with the surgeons, and they
24 said if they didn't operate he had no chance to live,
25 and if they operated he'd probably die because he was

1 probably too weak to live through the operation.

2 I went through the pictures in my purse,
3 and I talked to one of the surgeons and I showed him
4 a picture of Jay riding with Bill's little girl
5 Genna, and Jay was leaned over on his horse tying
6 Genna's shoe, and she got on her horse. And I said,
7 "I know that my husband looks like an old man ready
8 to die, but he's not. There's a lot of life left in
9 him." And I asked them to save him.

10 The doctor I told that to, it was his
11 first night on the gallbladder section, so I really
12 put a lot of pressure on him. Jay was able to come
13 home, he recovered, and we continued living there on
14 the farm.

15 But while he had been in the hospital, a
16 big storm came up and it blew over our grain leg, and
17 we thought what do we do. If we tell him as close to
18 death as he is, it will probably kill him. So we
19 kept it a secret.

20 That night, driving home from the
21 hospital, I said to him -- we were a couple miles
22 from the farm. I said, "Hon, when we get home you're
23 going to know that the grain leg is gone because the
24 storm came and blew it over while you were at the
25 hospital." And he looked at me and he said, "It's

1 okay, we'll rebuild," and we did. If you drive by
2 our farm now you'll see that grain leg sitting
3 there 90 feet in the air.

4 In November I had my knee removed,
5 November of 2017. One day Doug calls and said he
6 wanted to come over and have a meeting. Doug is
7 always welcome in our house. We said come on over.

8 We had no idea what the meeting was
9 about, and when he got there he talked to us about
10 the Hecate Energy solar project. So another big
11 decision in our farm, in our community.

12 We made an agreement with Hecate, and
13 the first question that I asked is, "What is the
14 solar going to look like to our neighbors, because
15 our neighbors are important to us? Our friendship
16 with our neighbors is important to us."

17 If this project goes through, we plan to
18 move. But I'm very grateful to have the opportunity
19 to say to my neighbors tonight that we're not moving
20 to get away from the solar system project. Because
21 we're both aging and experiencing some health issues,
22 we'd like to live in a climate with warmer weather in
23 the winters.

24 Even when you're renting your farm, what
25 I found out was my husband still stresses over the

1 crop. How could our crops not affect our money,
2 because we cash rent? We get the same amount of
3 money whether Doug has a successful crop or not a
4 successful crop.

5 But it's a matter of love of the farm,
6 it's a matter of pride when you drive down the road
7 and you see that healthy, thriving crop.

8 Hecate's answer to me, when I asked what
9 the solar system would look like when our neighbors
10 drove by -- because we understood from the very first
11 day that people weren't going to want to drive by and
12 just look at solar panels sticking up everywhere, and
13 they told us it would be set back from the road, it
14 will be fenced, there will be trees, there will be
15 grass, there will be wildflowers, and that made me
16 happy.

17 Even after we're gone, if this project
18 goes through, that farm, that land, will always have
19 a special place in our hearts and in our family's
20 hearts.

21 I'm only going to address one other
22 issue that I know a lot of the people who are sitting
23 out there are worried about, and that's the talk of
24 cancer.

25 So last night when I was preparing for

1 this, I Googled it. The leading cause of death in
2 the United States, and number one, is heart disease,
3 number two is cancer.

4 According to the National Cancer
5 Institute, this year, 2018, there will be
6 1,735,350,000 new cases of cancer. That's right here
7 in the United States. 609,840 people will die in the
8 United States in 2018 from cancer.

9 I don't think even the scientists know
10 what causes so much cancer in our country. I know
11 that these cases are not related to the solar system
12 that may or may not be built on our farm.

13 So the one thing I can tell you with all
14 surety is there's a lot of things out there causing
15 cancer today, and no family is safe or exempt from
16 it.

17 In our family, Jay lost his mother to
18 cancer in 1969, he lost his dad to cancer in 1980.
19 The year before, Jay got cancer himself. His brother
20 got cancer.

21 In my family, my dad had prostate
22 cancer, his sister got breast cancer, his sister's
23 daughter got breast cancer. Nobody in this room
24 wishes we didn't have cancer any more than I do.

25 Never would I want the decision that Jay

1 and I made to sell our farm, which we felt then, and
2 we still feel today, is in the best interest of our
3 family, but never would I want that decision to hurt
4 my neighbors and my friends.

5 Never would I want that decision to
6 damage the personal relationship that we have with
7 our neighbors and with our friends in our community.
8 Thank you.

9 ALJ WALSTRA: What is your question?

10 MR. PARTIN: On the form that we
11 received, it specifically states, if you wish to make
12 a statement, please focus your testimony on the
13 issues in the case, and be respectful of the time.

14 ALJ WALSTRA: Yes, I would say be
15 respectful of time.

16 MR. PARTIN: And I have also been
17 informed by Matt Butler, that is on the Siting Board,
18 prior to this, that the Law Judge has the ability to
19 limit conversations from three to five minutes. All
20 I ask is that we abide by the rules that were sent to
21 us.

22 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you, sir. Doug
23 Carraher. Raise your right hand. Raise your right
24 hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole
25 truth?

1 MR. CARRAHER: Yes.

2 Doug Carraher,
3 presented himself as a public witness, and being
4 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 DIRECT TESTIMONY

6 MR. CARRAHER: Thank you to the Ohio
7 Power Siting Board. Thank you, Judge Walstra, for
8 hearing me tonight, March 19, 2019.

9 I believe this solar farm would be a
10 great investment for the Lynchburg Clay Schools,
11 Bright Local Schools, and the County.

12 Our family has been at this location
13 for 47 years, and there are four generations involved
14 daily, with many good friends and our great
15 employees.

16 This is not an easy decision, but it's a
17 benefit not only to our family, but to the region.
18 This is a great opportunity for something good to
19 come out of this area of the County and the State.

20 We have a chance to generate a 2,000
21 percent tax increase on the land in this project,
22 without raising our own taxes.

23 The County has a poverty rate of 19.8
24 percent, with 28.4 percent of all children living in
25 the poverty. According to census data, 43.6 percent

1 of them have incomes 200 percent below the federal
2 poverty level. I'll leave a copy where the
3 statistics come from.

4 With these known statistics about our
5 children, it is our duty as a community, as citizens,
6 and for the elected officials of the schools, the
7 County Commissioners, the County Auditor, to stand
8 with this project and ask what we can do to help.
9 And Hecate's honored to help our community, the
10 County, and the schools. This will be a great
11 project.

12 As for the use of the land according to
13 NASS, this project footprint is less than one percent
14 of all land in the County. The solar field is less
15 than one percent of all the cropland in the County.
16 I will leave a copy of where that's from, also.

17 This will be a great project. As for
18 the farms involved in the project site, the site is
19 negative one house on the eight family farms involved
20 in the project site in the 47 years I've lived here.

21 The timber harvest is strictly the
22 landowner's choice. Some of the timber has been
23 harvested before and after agreeing to be a part of
24 this project. Hecate has no control over what we as
25 private landowners do with our farms.

1 There are four farms next to ours not in
2 the project that S&A Timber harvested. Timber is at
3 an all time high. Mr. Sean Ison is here tonight if
4 you want to find out what your timber is worth.

5 My family's home is next to the site.
6 My brother's, my nephew's homes are next to the site.
7 Our core farming operation will remain next to the
8 site, as some of you that are here tonight.

9 The site was picked by Hecate due to its
10 location to the PJM Transmission lines through our
11 farm with its mostly flat, wide open terrain.

12 Also, according to the data, Highland
13 County has some of the best sunshine in the State.
14 That is why they are here. This will be a great
15 project.

16 The panels are safe. They are used in
17 homes, in barn lots next to large amounts of military
18 installations in the south.

19 The workers of this project will be 80
20 percent domiciled Ohioans. This project will be a
21 great opportunity for all our local businesses.
22 Hiring local is Hecate's focus.

23 There are local businesses already
24 involved, enjoying the benefit of this project. This
25 project will create a ripple effect of supporting

1 growth; for example, restaurants, gas stations,
2 hotels, housing, et cetera, during the construction
3 of this project. After construction, the taxes of
4 \$7,000 per megawatt times 300 megawatts equal
5 \$2,100,000.

6 State mandated tax per year: The
7 remaining 10 to 15 employees in operations and
8 maintenance will be a part of our community for the
9 foreseeable future. This will be a great project.

10 As far as some of the neighboring
11 concerns, the Carrahers do not intend to replace the
12 rented land in this project, or any other land in any
13 project site, with new rented land.

14 We will have three current employees in
15 retirement due to their age by the time this project
16 gets started. At this point we want to concentrate
17 on the land that we're currently on.

18 This is a great opportunity for our
19 County, our schools, our community, and the greatest
20 benefit will come for those children that are not
21 even here yet, from a stronger school system and a
22 richer, stronger County that is in obvious need of
23 economic growth.

24 This will be a great project. Thank
25 you, your Honor, for hearing me tonight, and thanks

1 all the people.

2 ALJ WALSTRA: Angie Wright. Raise your
3 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
4 whole truth?

5 MS. WRIGHT: I do.

6 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Go ahead.

7 Angie Wright,
8 presented herself as a public witness, and being
9 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 DIRECT TESTIMONY

11 MS. WRIGHT: I'm making the first
12 statement on behalf of Randy Drewyor, Treasurer of
13 Bright Local School District. Mr. Drewyor apologizes
14 for not being able to attend this evening.

15 The Bright Local School District covers
16 approximately 120 square miles in southern Highland
17 County. The district's total valuation is about \$103
18 million. \$92 million of that total value is split
19 evenly between residential and agricultural property.
20 Public utility personal property makes up about \$10
21 million in valuation, with the remaining \$1 million
22 in commercial property.

23 With such a small amount of commercial
24 activity in the district, local employment is almost
25 totally dependent on agricultural and government,

1 e.g. Bright Local School District.

2 This puts a very heavy financial burden
3 on homeowners and farmers to fund the public
4 education and other local services.

5 This project is a unique opportunity for
6 the taxpayers and the school district. It would
7 almost be impossible for the school district to raise
8 the kind of money that will be generated when the
9 solar farm is complete.

10 In fact, this project will provide a
11 financial benefit to the district equivalent to
12 raising everyone's in the district property tax 25
13 percent. Increased revenue to educate our children
14 without increasing the financial burden on the
15 taxpayer is a major victory.

16 The Highland solar project represents a
17 very significant investment in our area; investments
18 that will bring construction jobs in the short-term,
19 some long-term employment opportunities, and a
20 revenue stream to the school district and township
21 that will help make -- alleviate some financial
22 pressures on taxpayers.

23 Additionally, this project will also
24 help satisfy a local desire for an increase in the
25 availability of electricity from renewable resources.

1 I believe this project is a win for
2 Ohio, a win for Highland County, and a win for the
3 taxpayers and students of Bright Local School
4 District. Randy Drewyor.

5 Now for my own personal things. I am
6 here to show support for the solar farm. I
7 personally am very much in favor of this project. I,
8 like everyone else, had a lot of concerns and worries
9 when I first heard of the project.

10 Let's face it, it's something very new
11 to most of us. And as we all know, our community is
12 very slow in accepting change. I also have done a
13 lot of research and listening. My concerns and
14 worries have changed to encouragement and support. I
15 truly believe this will be a good change.

16 I am currently serving on the Board of
17 Education for Bright Local Schools. Since my tenure
18 on the Board we have tried to pass two school levies,
19 which both have failed.

20 With almost no commercial activity in
21 our district, the burden to operate our school falls
22 heavily on our homeowners and the farmers. It would
23 almost be impossible for our school district to raise
24 that kind of money that this will produce.

25 The money that this project will

1 generate for our school and county cannot be denied.
 2 We are talking about millions of dollars for the life
 3 of this project, which is at 35 years as it stands
 4 now.

5 As a School Board and community member,
 6 I have studied, researched, and listened before I
 7 have made my decision on what is best for this
 8 district.

9 I do believe that the benefits our
 10 school will receive from the Highland solar project
 11 is what is best for the district and our students.
 12 Thank you.

13 ALJ WALSTRA: Bill Clutter. Raise your
 14 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
 15 whole truth?

16 MR. BILL CLUTTER: Yes.

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

20 DIRECT TESTIMONY

21 MR. BILL CLUTTER: My name is Bill
 22 Clutter, and this project will benefit our community
 23 in the form of a huge investment in tax base for the
 24 life of the project.

25 This means decades of funding for the

1 school system and the county services. Bright Local
2 Schools and Lynchburg will both benefit greatly from
3 the project.

4 This area desperately needs the
5 construction and operation jobs provided by this
6 project. As a local contractor I find this kind of
7 opportunity to be very exciting.

8 I know I don't speak for all businesses
9 around, but I can't think of any businesses that
10 wouldn't help benefit from a project as exciting as
11 this one.

12 The economic diversification of this
13 project will bring our community a good thing. It
14 will help make our community more resilient. Local
15 businesses will benefit greatly from the economic
16 activities around this project.

17 The PV solar panels are safe, nontoxic,
18 and do not emit any fumes. They will not release
19 toxins even if they are damaged.

20 I feel this is a huge win for our
21 community, and the state, and I hope you guys vote
22 for this project.

23 ALJ WALSTRA: John Perkinson. Raise
24 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
25 whole truth?

1 MR. PERKINSON: I do.

2 John Perkinson,
3 presented himself as a public witness, and being
4 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 DIRECT TESTIMONY

6 MR. PERKINSON: My name is John
7 Perkinson. I'm a contractor and a businessman with
8 about 35 years' experience. I really have no ties to
9 this County, but after doing some research and
10 looking into it -- I mean, I've worked with solar
11 programs before, it's a win-win situation.

12 The tax revenue that will help the high
13 schools and the grade schools will bring more people
14 out to the area, businesses will grow, and the
15 opportunity for jobs is limitless for something like
16 this. That's all I've got.

17 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Mike
18 Perkinson.

19 As he makes his way up here as well, if
20 you signed up and somebody is echoing the same
21 comments you want to give and you decide you don't
22 want to give comments, you can say pass, we can move
23 along as well.

24 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to
25 tell the truth, the whole truth?

1 MR. PERKINSON: Yes.

2 ALJ WALSTRA: Go ahead.

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

6 DIRECT TESTIMONY

7 MR. PERKINSON: I'm Mike Perkinson. I
8 had a whole story about jobs, and jobs it will
9 create, but then after listening to Jay Clutter talk
10 about the benefits of solar farms and the positive
11 affects, I think it speaks for itself. So there we
12 go.

13 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you.

14 Elizabeth Burkard. Raise your right
15 hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole
16 truth?

17 MS. BURKARD: I do.

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

21 DIRECT TESTIMONY

22 MS. BURKARD: Good evening. My name is
23 Elizabeth Burkard. I'm the granddaughter of Marilyn
24 Hauke and Marvin, and Shirley Eyre. Marvin has
25 passed away in October of 2018.

1 It is an honor to speak on behalf of my
2 family, the Hauke family, whom are unable to be here
3 this evening, and the Eyre family.

4 With more than 200 years of combined
5 service to agriculture in Highland County, both the
6 Hauke family and the Eyre family are pillars in this
7 farming community, and are in favor of the Highland
8 solar farm.

9 I am aware of the division this topic
10 has brought to our community. The purpose of my
11 voice this evening is to ask for those who are
12 against this project to consider all of the benefits
13 that this solar farm could bring to our rural area in
14 southwest Ohio.

15 One of the biggest benefits of the
16 Highland solar farm is the creation of jobs,
17 something this area is in desperate need of.

18 Highland County's current unemployment
19 rate is 7.1 percent, according to the Ohio Department
20 of Jobs & Family Services. We are in the top 25 out
21 of 88 counties in the State of Ohio regarding our
22 high rate of unemployment.

23 We have individuals seeking jobs, but
24 are unable to secure their employment. With a high
25 unemployment rate, growth and social cohesion are

1 threatened.

2 Hecate Energy plans to fill nearly 300
3 construction jobs during the first 12 to 18 months of
4 this project. In addition, operation and maintenance
5 will create additional jobs, which Hecate states they
6 will seek to locally source.

7 Solar power and careers in solar energy
8 are the future. We can embrace this project, or
9 another county will.

10 Safety and health are other concerns
11 regarding solar technology. According to Hecate, the
12 solar panels planned for this project are the
13 crystalline type PV panels on galvanized steel
14 structures.

15 They contain the same materials, glass,
16 aluminum, and plastic, used in many household
17 products such as windows.

18 This project's impact on the soil will
19 be limited to the placement of steel beams in the
20 ground. Hecate will maintain drainage, and perhaps
21 improve it. Studies conducted have also indicated
22 that the project will not have adverse impacts on
23 wildlife.

24 Because the creation of solar energy is
25 through the physical process of natural sunlight, as

1 opposed to a combustion process, solar energy does
2 not produce emissions into the air during operation.

3 I would be more concerned with the toxic
4 chemicals, sprays, fertilizers, weed killers,
5 et cetera, placed on our farmland and around our
6 homes that we currently breathe in on a daily basis.
7 Round-Up sprays and other harmful pollutants that
8 people use every day causes cancer. This is a proven
9 fact.

10 I could go on and on about the benefits
11 this project could bring to our area given the chance
12 to do so. I hope others will consider the benefit,
13 too, before making their decision regarding the
14 Highland solar farm. Thank you for your time.

15 ALJ WALSTRA: Benjamin Burkhard. Raise
16 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
17 whole truth?

18 MR. BURKHARD: I will.

19 Benjamin Burkhard,
20 presented himself as a public witness, and being
21 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

22 DIRECT TESTIMONY

23 MR. BURKHARD: Good evening. My name is
24 Ben Burkhard and I am speaking tonight on behalf of
25 the Eyre Farms -- Shirley is with us tonight -- many

1 of you know Marvin passed away -- as well as the
2 Hauke Farms, Marilyn. I'm also speaking tonight as
3 a citizen of Highland County.

4 Each day in my job I deal with numbers;
5 that's decimals, percentages, fractions. So when I
6 started to learn more about this, of course I pay
7 attention to the numbers first.

8 One thing that really stands out to me,
9 obviously having a small community, is jobs. So
10 during the production of this solar plant, which will
11 take roughly 12 to 18 months, the projections are
12 there will be an expected 268 jobs with an annual
13 payroll of \$56 million. That equals \$200,000 per
14 year for each job in salary and benefits. On monthly
15 averages, that equates to over \$3 million average
16 payroll into this area.

17 Who will benefit? Area businesses.
18 Even a temporary stimulus of this magnitude can
19 greatly impact the businesses in this area.

20 What about permanent jobs? Projections
21 are that there will be roughly 15 permanent jobs,
22 primary and secondary, all at an annual payroll of
23 \$2-1/2 million. That's an average of \$167,000 per
24 year for each job in salary and benefits.

25 That's the potential of 15 families in

1 the area that could greatly impact their livelihood
2 and the local economy.

3 The next thing is property taxes. In my
4 research, the farmers that are proposed to be part of
5 the solar farm pay annual taxes of around \$110,000
6 per year in property tax.

7 The projections for the property taxes
8 paid after the solar farm is built is at a minimum of
9 2.1 million per year property taxes. That's an
10 annual increase of 1,800 percent in property taxes
11 for that area.

12 What are property taxes used for? Two
13 things, primarily; road construction/maintenance, as
14 well as public schools.

15 The solar farm has a life expectancy
16 of 35 years. \$2.1 million each year over 35 years
17 equates to over \$70 million for this area.

18 What if we say status quo? We lose
19 almost \$67 million over 35 years of potential tax
20 dollars in Highland County and Mowrystown.

21 Some have expressed concerns on who
22 would be responsible for the wear and tear on the
23 road. Good question. I think over \$2 million in
24 additional tax proceeds to the County should help
25 greatly in repairs of the road, as well as make all

1 our schools much, much better.

2 Thank you for listening to my comments.
3 While I can understand the questions/concerns of some
4 within the local community, I urge everyone to think
5 about the positive attributes this can and will
6 bring.

7 For far too long this area has been
8 struggling. This presents an opportunity to help
9 change that trend.

10 I will close with this. This move to
11 renewable energy is not something that is going away,
12 you see it every day in the news. We have an
13 opportunity to be one of the largest, if not the
14 largest, in the State of Ohio and set a precedent.

15 Failing to act will not halt this
16 change, but what it will do is allow another area 30,
17 50, a hundred miles down the road, to benefit.

18 I'm sure our neighbors and surrounding
19 counties will greatly jump at this opportunity.
20 Thank you.

21 ALJ WALSTRA: Charles Carraher. Raise
22 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
23 whole truth?

24 MR. CARRAHER: I do.

25 ALJ WALSTRA: Go ahead.

1 Charles Carraher,
2 presented himself as a public witness, and being
3 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 DIRECT TESTIMONY

5 MR. CARRAHER: I'm Charles Carraher.
6 I'm 66 years old. We moved to the farm in 1972. It
7 has been my goal ever since we moved there as being a
8 community participant.

9 I have, over the years, participated.
10 I've been with the Hillsboro baseball, different
11 school functions. I help on school projects.

12 We started this project that came to us
13 in 2008 to 2015. We kept it to ourselves, kept it
14 quiet, because we were concerned about all the things
15 we need to answer, all the questions we had. We have
16 had so many sleepless nights that it's unreal.

17 And all your concerns, everything you
18 have done, everything you're thinking about, we have
19 tried to do in our own minds.

20 I can tell you this; the big one is,
21 they talk about the radiation. I sit there and I say
22 to myself, they have solar at schools, public
23 schools, they have solar everywhere you look. How in
24 the world would our government allow solar to be put
25 in our public schools if it was dangerous?

1 My other concern that we had, it's been
2 a lot of concern to everybody, is runoff. And my
3 concern, my thing is, is that I believe that the
4 runoff -- it will be a lot less because they will
5 have grass that's sowed underneath the panels.

6 Water runs a lot slower through grasses
7 than it does no-tilled dirt. The water will move a
8 lot faster on no-tilled dirt than it will through
9 grass, so the runoff should be a lot less problem.

10 Those have been a lot of our concerns,
11 the same as the community, the same as people being
12 involved.

13 I've also had two sons who graduated
14 from White Oak. I've had three grandsons graduate
15 from White Oak. So I do put a lot of time and energy
16 into the community, and I hope and plan on continuing
17 that, and I plan on staying in this community. Thank
18 you.

19 ALJ WALSTRA: Ronald Dorset. Raise your
20 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
21 whole truth?

22 MR. DORSET: Yes.

23 Ronald Dorset,
24 presented himself as a public witness, and being
25 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

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DIRECT TESTIMONY

MR. DORSET: My name is Ronald Dorset. My property borders some of the property that is considered in this project.

I'm a little bit -- I don't believe that we have had any good answers to the flooding concerns, and I'm concerned about that. I told myself, I believe that there needs to be a large retaining pond built to hold back the flooding.

If you were to build tens of thousands of houses on this 3,400 acres, there would be sewage lines and so forth put in. I am not aware of this as the first meeting went about. That's one of my major concerns.

Other concerns is wildlife. Wildlife brings a bunch of money into the State. Once these fences are put up, wildlife will be diverted. I believe that's something that needs to be considered by the State people, by our County Commissioners.

Also, we talk about a lot of jobs being created for the first 18 months or so, but actually once this thing is completed, you have about 12, perhaps 15 jobs, actually a net loss of jobs of most of the reasons some of our large farmers have. So I believe it creates a loss of jobs.

1 As far as I know for this area, I looked
2 at the one over at 62 and the one out here where Duke
3 is at the western edge of Highland County, I believe
4 what we're really creating is a dead zone in Highland
5 County, and I don't believe that the County
6 Commissioners have even considered this.

7 I don't believe that the bottom third of
8 Highland County should bear the burden of creating a
9 dead zone in Highland County -- excuse me. My voice
10 is cracking. I've had a cold -- a place where no one
11 wants to live near these panels, a place where there
12 will be no houses built, no cars bought, no people to
13 buy groceries, tractors, combines, or anything like
14 this. So I believe this is creating a dead zone.

15 You stand here in Bright Local School
16 District. Ten years from now if this dead zone is
17 put up, this school probably won't exist because no
18 one wants to live here. That's my feeling.

19 Again, my property borders this. What
20 I'm afraid of is the devaluation of my property. No
21 one wants to buy property next to a solar system. I
22 believe that's one.

23 Noise, that's probably something that
24 needs to be considered. I believe that the noise
25 from the convertors and so forth will have to be made

1 known.

2 I've also been told that because of the
3 solar system that's going in, everyone will pay
4 higher electricity. I believe that's something to be
5 concerned about.

6 And I think that -- and I wish that the
7 State would say that no solar system could be put in
8 larger than a thousand acres in one location.

9 I believe that the power lines do not
10 stop at Highland County, they go clear across the
11 State, and I believe that other counties should share
12 in this burden, not just southern Highland County.
13 Thank you.

14 ALJ WALSTRA: Jeffrey Wilson. Raise
15 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
16 whole truth?

17 MR. WILSON: I will.

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

21 DIRECT TESTIMONY

22 MR. WILSON: Hi. My name is Jeffrey
23 Wilson, and I am the President of the Friends of
24 Serpent Mound, which is a 501(c)(3) organization over
25 in Adams County. For those that are aware of Serpent

1 Mound, I live right next door to it, and our
2 organization helps support that site.

3 And the reason I'm here is I didn't know
4 about this project until about five or six days ago,
5 and got told of it by somebody I knew in Highland
6 County.

7 And so I went out into the website,
8 looked at all the information, downloaded all the
9 reports, read all the reports, and in looking at the
10 map, I believe that maybe on the south side of the
11 property, southwest side portion of the property,
12 there may be an archeological site that is important.

13 And the information that I received
14 about ten years ago about the site comes from The
15 History of Clay Township, which was written in 1955.
16 There may be some people in the room that may
17 remember Alva Martin. She was the author of that.
18 It was sort of locally written.

19 She wrote The History of Clay Township,
20 and I'll just quote a section of it, because I got
21 the document. It says that, "The best specimen of
22 mounds in the township, or perhaps in the County,
23 with the possible exception of Fort Hill, is found in
24 the eastern part of the township. It is in the form
25 of a serpent, about four-tenths of a mile long,

1 one-and-a-half feet high, 20 feet wide," and it goes
2 on to describe it a little bit.

3 And it gives a location, which I believe
4 is in the southwest portion right on the border. It
5 may or may not be within the project boundaries,
6 itself.

7 I hope that through the process of the
8 archeologists looking at this, that they may or may
9 not find it. It's been my experience in dealing with
10 a lot of professional archeological organizations and
11 Terracon -- this is the company that's been hired to
12 do this kind of assessment -- it's my understanding
13 that they do a fairly superficial look into
14 archeological resources.

15 And I know that the Ohio Historic
16 Preservation Office, which is responsible for
17 collecting that information across the State, only
18 gets the information that they receive. They don't
19 generally go out and actually look for that
20 information.

21 I know the archeologists at the OHPO
22 office. (Inaudible) is a terrific guy. I worked
23 with him in the past. I'm sure that they do not have
24 a record of this archeological site at the OHPO.

25 So I would propose that this information

1 go into the record, but that -- and I had a
2 conversation with the VP of development here just
3 before the meeting, and they say that they want to do
4 the right thing, just to make sure that that
5 archeological site, if it exists within the project
6 boundaries, is protected or set aside so that it
7 doesn't get destroyed. Thank you very much.

8 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you.

9 MR. WILSON: I'll add one comment. She
10 just reminded me. I have general -- personally I am
11 in favor of the project. I have no issues of -- you
12 know, outside of this.

13 And, you know, I'm an AEP customer and
14 I'm actually enthusiastic about having clean energy
15 sent to my home to pay for. I would much rather have
16 clean energy than not. But I know it doesn't affect
17 me personally within the community, so my concerns
18 are different.

19 ALJ WALSTRA: Michael Carraher. Raise
20 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
21 whole truth?

22 MR. MICHAEL CARRAHER: Yes.

23 Michael Carraher,
24 presented himself as a public witness, and being
25 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

1 DIRECT TESTIMONY

2 MR. MICHAEL CARRAHER: I'm Michael
3 Carraher. I'm a fourth generation, and I work at
4 Carraher Ag. I'm not a big public speaker, so sorry
5 if I mess up here.

6 But I went to high school here, along
7 with my brothers. We invested a lot of time here,
8 along with my family, who has helped at the schools a
9 good bit.

10 I know that there will be a lot of tax
11 revenue coming through here. And growing up, there's
12 about -- every year we hear White Oak is going to be
13 here in ten years, our school's going to be here in
14 ten years.

15 And I don't have any kids, but when it
16 comes down to that point, I'd like my kids to come
17 here, like my dad come here, and me and my brothers
18 come here. That's basically all I want to say.

19 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Danny Hayslip.
20 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
21 truth, the whole truth?

22 MR. DANNY HAYSLIP: I do.

23 Danny Hayslip,
24 presented himself as a public witness, and being
25 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

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DIRECT TESTIMONY

MR. DANNY HAYSLIP: Good evening. My name is Danny Hayslip, and I'm here to speak in favor of the solar power.

I'm a property owner in Adams County and currently own 60 solar panels on six different off-grid systems. I've already purchased 21 more panels to start four more systems on a couple of rental units.

The reason for my input is the amount of false information that is floated through Facebook and idle chat.

Solar power is, by far, the safest energy source offered to mankind. There is no danger of leaky chemicals, offensive odors, noisy equipment, or hazardous exposures.

Solar panels absorb sunlight, and on my systems, reflect minor sun rays, mostly from the trim molding. Solar power is the only system I feel that a person could sleep, without worries, right next to your house.

My closest solar panels are 20 feet from where I sleep, so I feel confident that I'm an expert on this claim.

As far as the dangers to wildlife, since

1 owning solar panels more than five years, I've
2 noticed no problems of this claim. I have noticed
3 that birds have nested less than six inches from
4 under a panel on top of a junction box, and have
5 returned to use this nest for at least three
6 different times.

7 Deer have eaten cucumber plants planted
8 around the base of the support poles under other
9 panels. There is no discolored plant life that I
10 have noticed, though for the most part, I do spray
11 herbicides to control this.

12 ALJ WALSTRA: Mila Landess. Raise your
13 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
14 whole truth?

15 MS. LANDESS: I will.

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

19 DIRECT TESTIMONY

20 MS. LANDESS: My name is Mila Landess.
21 I'm not a public speaker at all, but I want to get up
22 here and voice my opinion. And I wanted to say to
23 Margaret and Jay, and all the rest of you, there's no
24 hostility. As Margaret says, we are really a tight
25 knit community.

1 Margaret came to my house one night with
2 her little girl in a blanket over her head because
3 Billy cut her hair off right here, and I was a
4 beautician at that time, and she cried and asked me
5 to help her fix it. We tried, not too successfully.
6 Anyway, enough of that. That's not what we're here
7 for.

8 They say that this doesn't cause health
9 issues, but if you go out on the Internet and type in
10 solar panel, or something about solar, you'll find
11 that there's articles out there that says that these
12 does cause health problems through electromagnetic
13 hypersensitivity; it's known as EHS. And it also can
14 cause ADHD in children at school, because there is
15 small radiation that comes from these.

16 And this is -- like in a big one, they
17 say that it will send the scale meter right off the
18 wall when it is tested, that that's how much
19 radiation comes out of there.

20 I live not too far from this, and I'm
21 like everybody else; I want our farm to be left to
22 our children and to our grandchildren. And I have a
23 new great grand baby who is going to be living pretty
24 close to it, and I do not want my children to have
25 health problems, as anybody else.

1 And also are the taxes. Is this going
2 to schools? I really feel like Mr. Young, we need a
3 chance to hear Bill Fawley come down, because a tax
4 person couldn't be here tonight, and it isn't the way
5 we think it's going to be.

6 So I ask the Commissioner to take this
7 into consideration when they make their decision on
8 this. And the disagreement with how many jobs, they
9 said 40 to 50 jobs would be the jobs that it would
10 provide permanently here, and that was only at the
11 first meeting.

12 We asked who are the people that are
13 going to be putting it up, is it going to be people
14 from our community, and they said no, they bring
15 their own crew in.

16 And the roads are supposed to be
17 replaced. As they are now, there will be a lot of
18 traffic on it. This is my fear of what's going to
19 happen. Thank you.

20 ALJ WALSTRA: Mark Partin. Raise your
21 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
22 whole truth?

23 MR. PARTIN: Yes.

24 Mark Partin,
25 presented himself as a public witness, and being

1 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

2 DIRECT TESTIMONY

3 MR. PARTIN: My name is Mark Partin. I
4 reside at 1515 Hess Road, Sardinia, Ohio 45171. My
5 children like to pitch baseball, and we're going to
6 be so close to the project that it can be probably
7 pitched right into one of the panels.

8 To get started, I am here to speak on
9 behalf of myself and 275 people who have signed a
10 petition against the construction of the solar panel
11 project in Highland County.

12 I also want it on the record that some
13 of the petition papers that were submitted were cut
14 off in the process of making copies by the people in
15 the community, and those names that are blacked out
16 with marker had become duplicate signatures and were
17 not counted in the official count.

18 It should be recognized that all
19 petition papers were signed on the premises that they
20 are against, and are giving myself, in part,
21 permission to speak on their behalf at the local
22 public hearing commencing on March 19th, 2019, at
23 6:00 p.m. at the White Oak High School.

24 I would also like to go on record that I
25 am speaking for 275 people, and ask that enough time

1 be granted.

2 Margaret, Jay, your stories were
3 wonderful. I want my kids to have your story.
4 Margaret, you're absolutely right, the farm is the
5 best place to be. We, as a community, just don't
6 want the ending to your story.

7 As a community, we are very
8 disappointed, emotional, angry in the process of this
9 project. To the common, everyday consumer working
10 for and living to support his or her family,
11 investing in the properties for the future of their
12 retirement or for their children, how are we supposed
13 to know our rights, where to start, who to contact?
14 Why wasn't there no educational meeting for the
15 public or adjacent landowners?

16 I will give credit to the Ohio Farm
17 Bureau coming in at the last hour. Why did no one
18 take a stance anywhere to try to inform and/or
19 educate the public for adjacent landowners on what
20 was going on, and how it would effect them?

21 We heard that the verbiage of this
22 project started in 2015; we heard that today. We can
23 tell you, we have had no help, didn't know where to
24 turn. We didn't have the rule book, nor did we have
25 a play book.

1 We were ambushed by legal documents and
2 legal processes that we knew nothing about. Not
3 until September 17th, 2018 were we notified of this
4 project. However, it has been going on for over
5 three years.

6 There are people who have been legally
7 represented and/or advised long before this project
8 become public knowledge; therefore, a minimum of 33
9 months unfair advantage to the people of this
10 community and adjacent landowners.

11 We expressed our concerns to many
12 agencies, and the basic response we got, if we got a
13 response at all, was talk to PUCO.

14 I emailed AEP. Their response was we
15 care about our customers, however, please inform your
16 concerns to PUCO, and they go on to tell me how I can
17 do my online billing in the same email.

18 I emailed the Division of Wildlife
19 asking if they were aware of the project, and that we
20 had concerns. No response. Absolutely none.

21 Because of the legal process that this
22 project surrounds, our community has been shut down
23 many a times, and our attempts even to participate,
24 even to extend tonight's ability to speak on this
25 community's behalf and hopes, have run out of time.

1 We have been let down by our Township
2 Trustees, our County Commissioners, the very people
3 that voted you in office. No matter your position in
4 office, whether you are for the project or against,
5 you have the duty to serve the public.

6 Both the County Commissioners and
7 Township Trustees could be sitting at the judiciary
8 hearing on March 26th, 2019, representing the County,
9 again, whether they are for it or against, but no one
10 is listed on the people of record as of today.

11 Outside of this, County Commissioners,
12 where have you been? You have the right to fight for
13 this community's quality of life, but how can you
14 when you haven't even been door-to-door to involve
15 yourself in the community or with the adjacent
16 landowners that voted you in office that are affected
17 by the project?

18 You have had more conversations with
19 those who are in the project, and no involvement with
20 those outside the project.

21 As far as the Township Trustees, all 275
22 of us, we understand you are probably in the same
23 boat as the rest of us, not knowing what your
24 involvement can be legally; however, let this be a
25 learning curve for all Township Trustees.

1 And as far as our County Auditor, we
2 would ask that you stand up, speak for or against the
3 project, and explain this tax abatement to our
4 community.

5 Everybody talks about how much money and
6 jobs this will bring locally during construction.
7 For those of you that embrace this idea, it's short
8 sustainability. As farmers, we should be very
9 familiar with how that works.

10 As far as permanent jobs, all the
11 papers, write-ups that you see, read, hear, anywhere
12 from 110 to 150 local permanent jobs, the statement
13 has been made by the solar company to the public,
14 only 15 permanent jobs.

15 Did anyone even consider the 490 people
16 south of here that lost their jobs, or the 19,000,
17 over closures of coal plants? How do you think those
18 communities are doing? Think it's a fair trade?
19 Knock out 490 plus 19,000 to get 15? 4,000 short
20 lived.

21 Wait. It's not about fair, it's about
22 legal. We keep forgetting that being in an
23 everyday -- we keep forgetting that being an everyday
24 common citizen of this community, that it's not about
25 fair, it's about legal.

1 PUCO, you are this community's last
2 voice, and we want to remind you and the people of
3 this community the history of some of these companies
4 behind this project.

5 AEP, known as American Electric Power.
6 AEP is one of the nation's largest electric
7 utilities. Since 2000 they have 53 individual
8 records of fines and penalties totalling to
9 approximately \$4.8 billion in seven categories,
10 including environmental and health and safety; 20
11 environmental, 21 in health and safety. 77 percent
12 of their whole fines are in those two categories.

13 They were ruled against in a finding of
14 a court case where they found guilty -- they were
15 found guilty in excessive profits for overcharging
16 the consumer, ordered to pay 42 million, in a case
17 where consumers said wasn't enough.

18 They avoided being criminally charged --
19 criminally charged by the Department of Justice of
20 submission of inaccurate reports concerning the
21 commodity report by cooperating with the authority,
22 but were still fined \$81 million.

23 And the only reason they were not
24 criminally charged, they fired the employees that
25 were creating the falsified documents, claiming that

1 they knew nothing about it.

2 I'm sorry, but if I got an extra \$2
3 million in my pocket, I kind of think I know I've got
4 it. If AEP admits investing so much money in
5 renewable energies, their \$4.8 million in fines
6 currently today will be reduced.

7 DP&L, Dayton Power & Light, they are the
8 ones that own the lines. Since 2000 they have 39
9 individual records of fines and penalties totalling
10 to approximately \$9.3 million in four categories
11 including environmental and health and safety, 26 of
12 the environmental, and 11 in health and safety, 95
13 percent of their total fines in those two categories.

14 They are tactfully closing existing coal
15 plants to create the false demand need for renewable
16 energies, and leaving 25 percent of the local
17 population or community out of jobs, which consists
18 of the earlier statement 490 people, and the overall
19 coal plant, 19,000.

20 That creates a \$26-and-a-half billion
21 loss -- economic loss and elimination of jobs. DP&L
22 versus (inaudible). DP&L hired them to do some work.

23 We all know that Ohio has at will
24 employment. It means you can be fired at will. This
25 gentleman's wife and two young children are in a

1 serious car accident. The gentleman came back to
2 DP&L, asked if he could have two months off to get
3 his wife and children back to health. DP&L fired
4 him.

5 Hecate, your name and logo represents
6 the Greek goddess who ruled over the earth, ruled
7 over the earth, sea, and sky.

8 Someone in your website uses words like
9 execute, mission, and you use large amounts of money
10 to describe your successes, and you claim you create
11 circular trust among -- among themselves, utilities,
12 and communities like ours. All of this is stated on
13 your website.

14 I hope you're proud of what you have
15 done. You have pit our community against each other,
16 caused separation of families in the project, or
17 outside the project. And we anticipate more as this
18 disturbance you have brought to our community has and
19 continues to rip us apart.

20 All of us have invested in our life, in
21 our properties for our retirement, and the future of
22 our kids. You have said many times to us in this
23 community, our properties will not devalue in price.

24 Well, the world we come from is built on
25 supply and demand, and the last time we checked, 275

1 of us, there's no demand for houses or properties
2 that are in the middle of a 3,300 acre solar project,
3 nor is there a demand for energy in Ohio at this
4 time.

5 Currently, as a community, we are asking
6 for PUCO, the Ohio Power Siting Board, to deny or
7 delay the decision on the Highland County solar
8 project on the basis that our community deserves a
9 right to be informed legally, and represented or
10 advised equally as those who are for the project,
11 before and after it became public notice.

12 We were shut out because of the legal
13 process, and by the time we discovered our legal
14 right, there was little to no opportunity to plea or
15 even discuss our case.

16 We ask PUCO that the information
17 provided by Terracon for Hecate Energy be dismissed
18 as misrepresentation and false information for
19 reasons being pictures provided, Exhibit J, do not
20 show the public adequate fencing, view protection, or
21 proper distance from the roadway or houses.

22 We believe these are filed papers with
23 the State, and should show accuracy. If we don't
24 show accuracy, we risk approving this project and
25 those pictures coming back at us.

1 Number 2, pictures provided, Exhibit J,
2 are the property -- are of properties that are not
3 part of the project area. Property owner, highly
4 disturbed over the situation due to harassment of
5 this project and misrepresentation of the information
6 filed.

7 Number 3, Exhibit H. All structures
8 outside the project area within 250 or 1,000 feet are
9 not listed, resulting in a misrepresentation of value
10 calculated -- value calculated in actual number of
11 single-family homes affected. There are more homes
12 than what is provided in this report.

13 Exhibit H expresses that there are
14 requirements associated with the distance
15 requirements of 250 to 1,000 feet, but currently
16 homeowners have not been notified of such
17 information.

18 How can we approve such a project when
19 the homeowners are just -- and it's a lot of votes --
20 we're just hanging out there and enjoying our time on
21 this earth.

22 Number 5, Exhibit G, offsite farms are
23 misrepresented, and property displayed as an off-site
24 parcel has nothing to do with the project. Property
25 owner highly disturbed over situation. Exhibit G.

1 ALJ WALSTRA: Mr. Partin, do you have a
2 lot more to go?

3 MR. PARTIN: No. I'm sure I'll be
4 significantly less than -- Yes, I'm about done.

5 ALJ WALSTRA: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. PARTIN: How can a single-family
7 home listed under the premise of 250 to 1,000 feet,
8 and not part of the project, also be listed as an
9 offsite parcel?

10 Clarification of offsite parcel is
11 needed to understand clarity of the property for all
12 those involved, legal or nonlegal. Why aren't there
13 pictures of the houses in the area that will be
14 surrounded by solar panels.

15 Before I make my conclusion, there are
16 some schools in the area that will benefit. There is
17 one school -- and I'm not here speaking on their
18 behalf -- one of these schools are financially sound,
19 the other is not.

20 Property taxes. We asked the County
21 Auditor to explain if this is approved property taxes
22 in, and the abatement taxes don't start until you
23 flip the switch.

24 You guys -- some people comment about
25 jobs in the area. People, we're a farming community.

1 People that are here are here because we are farmers.
2 Farmers own the land. We enjoy that.

3 We enjoy seeing your equipment through
4 the mud, or through the shiniest best day harvest or
5 plant time. 3,200 acres, 22,000 people to feed,
6 gone. Doesn't matter where your grain goes in the
7 world, 22,000 people will not be fed.

8 Core samples were taken. I would like
9 PUCO to investigate the information given on the
10 northern piece of the property. Core samples were
11 taken within five feet of the road ditch.
12 Verification harvest took place within two weeks ago,
13 give or take a few days.

14 The Indian artifacts the gentleman
15 earlier mentioned, there are Indian artifacts that
16 are located along 138; tremendous. That was shared
17 by individuals.

18 In collusion, we are asking PUCO, the
19 Ohio Siting Board, to stand up for this community and
20 landowners who are adjacent to the project, and deny
21 and delay the construction of this solar project
22 until further investigation can be made since this
23 community has been denied to speak by Hecate Energy
24 at the meeting in Columbus, Ohio, March 26, 2019.

25 ALJ WALSTRA: Tony Logan.

1 MR. LOGAN: I'll pass.

2 ALJ WALSTRA: Dan Shirey. Raise your
3 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
4 whole truth?

5 MR. SHIREY: Yes.

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

9 DIRECT TESTIMONY

10 MR. SHIREY: My name is Dan Shirey. I'm
11 the Business Manager for IBEW Local 575,
12 Electrician's Union. We cover ten counties here in
13 Ohio, including Highland County.

14 And I'm just here to urge your support
15 for this project. We have many members that's been
16 out of work. You know, it was mentioned the DP&L
17 powerhouse. We lost those jobs.

18 Grant it, we're construction workers,
19 you know. We basically live on temporary projects.
20 I know it's not residual projects that will come back
21 year after year, but I was raised -- my father was an
22 electrician. He raised us basically with temporary
23 jobs.

24 If you're on a job site you work it
25 until you're done and then you move on to the next

1 one. And this job, where it's estimated that it will
2 create somewhere near -- at least about 300 jobs just
3 for electricians alone for 12 months, 18 months,
4 which is enough to feed a family.

5 But I had one member here in Highland
6 County who couldn't be here tonight because he's
7 working up above Columbus and out of town, so he
8 couldn't be here. He would really like to be able to
9 come home and be able to work in his backyard. Thank
10 you.

11 ALJ WALSTRA: Mark Wilson. Raise your
12 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
13 whole truth?

14 MR. WILSON: I do.

15 Mark Wilson,
16 presented himself as a public witness, and being
17 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

18 DIRECT EXAMINATION

19 MR. WILSON: My name is Mark Wilson. I
20 don't live in the neighborhood where the project is
21 proposed, but I've been a lifelong resident of
22 Highland County.

23 I see this as a very big opportunity for
24 our families. A big opportunity doesn't come along
25 very often. A small rural community, you have to

1 kind of take advantage of kind of what comes your
2 way.

3 As I understand it, there's probably a
4 minimum of a \$70 million difference to our County
5 for 35 years; that's at a minimum. It's been a long
6 time, if ever, that a project like that has ever, you
7 know, come our way.

8 I certainly respect those in the
9 community where you live. I don't know where you
10 live, and I respect your opinion one way or the
11 other; I certainly do.

12 We're in an unzoned county. I wake up
13 every day to a sewage plant and a junk car dealer in
14 my neighborhood. There's a lot more worse things you
15 can see and look at than solar panels.

16 And so I think when I look at it for
17 this school system, Lynchburg, the County as a whole,
18 all the County services, vocational schools, fire,
19 police protection, sheriff, and so forth, it's a real
20 win, you know, for the County as a whole, and I stand
21 in support of this project. Thank you.

22 ALJ WALSTRA: Richard Shriver. Raise
23 your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
24 whole truth?

25 MR. SHRIVER: I do.

1 Richard Shriver,
2 presented himself as a public witness, and being
3 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 DIRECT EXAMINATION

5 MR. SHRIVER: I'm Richard Shriver. I
6 live at an unknown area of the district, about seven
7 miles from here, called Sugar Tree Ridge. I'm not
8 from Morwystown, I'm from Sugar Tree Ridge.

9 My family -- I'm a fourth generation
10 farmer. So we have Morwystown, Sugar Tree Ridge,
11 Belfast, and all the way to Harmon, that encompasses
12 our district.

13 Things as we move east tend to be
14 forgotten. I'm here to support it. I think I've
15 heard the displeasure from the people that are upset.
16 I think they should look at the bigger picture.

17 The win -- I think it's a win for the
18 community, a win for the schools, I think it's a win
19 for the area. If not, some other community, some
20 other area, is going to grab it up.

21 You can look off to our west, they are
22 growing by leaps and bounds; they would be glad to
23 welcome more. I think of the farmland here that
24 we're going to potentially lose.

25 I listened to Margaret Clutter talk

1 about her first day in that school when I sat back
2 there, and I was thinking there was probably one day
3 in 1976 on a Monday, when I walked into her sixth
4 grade class, that she was probably more scared.

5 She's made it, and so have I. She was a
6 good teacher, and I thank her. But she was probably
7 glad when I moved on to seventh grade.

8 I also think back of the time in 1986
9 when my father, who was injured in a combine
10 accident -- it was 1986, April the 6th, so it's
11 coming up real soon -- and this community, the whole
12 County actually -- there was 300 farmers -- we were
13 farming about 4,000 acres at the time, and 300
14 farmers from all over the County gathered around.
15 They tilled every acre of our ground in one day's
16 time. I've never forgotten it.

17 And I think the community, there's a lot
18 of spirit here, a lot of pride, and I think you guys
19 should probably -- we'll call them the winners, the
20 ones that are selling. It's a struggle for them, and
21 something they have not taken lightly.

22 If you're a neighbor and you're upset,
23 you know, are you upset because they didn't ask you
24 to buy your farm, you know?

25 I'm also a real estate broker. Been

1 licensed for 36 years, licensed in Ohio, I'm licensed
2 in Kentucky, and I'm licensed in Tennessee as of
3 November of last year, so I travel a lot.

4 My roots is right here in the Sugar Tree
5 area. I used to run these halls, and never got
6 caught in the fence. That was a lot of fun. And
7 when I think of some other farmland that's lost in
8 the area, I think of Harris Farm Road, for those of
9 you who remember that.

10 Harris Farm Road was nothing but
11 farmland. Where would Highland County be today if we
12 didn't have everything on Harris Farm Road? That was
13 farmland.

14 Things are changing. They are going to
15 change. You got to learn to adapt a little bit with
16 it. But if this was a foreclosure auction, all these
17 people would probably still be in attendance tonight,
18 and they would be here for the wrong reasons. They
19 would just want to see who ended up with it.

20 The people that have the land now, they
21 are struggling. They have had good times. Last year
22 corn was in the neighborhood of 3.25 a bushel, 7.50
23 for beans. That's tough farming. Anybody that's
24 lived on a farm knows that.

25 And let's say those people are bad

1 managers, and they lost it, and this was an auction.
2 They are real sad. You think you're sad, they would
3 be real sad.

4 Their families have got generations of
5 family members. It's a business decision for them.
6 They are not taking it lightly.

7 It's a -- in life you only get to make
8 one or two big deals, one or two big home runs, and
9 this is their home run, and we should be happy for
10 them. We shouldn't be picking on them. We should be
11 happy for them, should be applauding them.

12 And the community surrounding everybody,
13 it's good for -- jobs come and go, but who knows what
14 it's going to bring with it. There will be some bad
15 things. You know, we could have -- what if that was
16 all turned into a mobile home park, how would you
17 feel about that? How about a county landfill?

18 I mean, there's a lot worse things that
19 could happen to the land. I think we all know who
20 the families are, it's no big secret. They are good
21 families, all of them. Been in generations of their
22 families. But it's a life-changing event for them.

23 It's not for their kids, their grand
24 kid, kids that ain't even born yet, but it will
25 change their lives forever. And it's going to change

1 ours, and we should grow and stay with them. That's
2 all I got. Appreciate it.

3 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Rhonda Fannin.
4 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
5 truth, the whole truth?

6 MS. FANNIN: I affirm.

7 Rhonda Fannin,
8 presented herself as a public witness, and being
9 first affirmed, testified as follows:

10 DIRECT TESTIMONY

11 MS. FANNIN: Good evening, PUCO, Siting
12 Board, Hecate representatives, Judge, all the
13 community. I came here tonight -- Rhonda Fannin, my
14 husband Tom. Our address is 4211 Newman Road here in
15 Hillsboro, so we're in the area.

16 I come here basically representing our
17 community and our family, but also my job. I work
18 for a community action. Ohio needs jobs here in the
19 County, so we provide training for individuals that
20 have lost their jobs. We help those that are
21 unemployed with reemployment.

22 We provide all kinds of services for
23 just individuals and employees in our County, so if
24 you have any employment needs, please come and see
25 us, we will definitely do our best to help.

1 So job creation is huge, so we're very
2 thankful that Highland County has this opportunity.
3 I see it as a win-win, so I'm definitely here in
4 support.

5 I mean, Appalachia, I've grown up in
6 Adams County. My husband and I have been here for
7 over 30 years. We have raised our three daughters
8 here. They have all come tonight. So this is very
9 near and dear to us. We have a grandson now, and he
10 may very well walk the same halls, too.

11 So we have seen this community struggle
12 financially. We have seen them come together as true
13 community members. And the schools have struggled
14 financially.

15 So I know that just the tax revenue that
16 will come from this project -- I mean, we cannot even
17 envision what this will do for our schools, we just
18 can't. And it's a 35-year project, so we cannot
19 envision it, we just can't, what it will do for our
20 community.

21 My husband and I both work full-time
22 jobs. My husband commutes outside the County, and we
23 know a lot of individuals who do that for jobs. I've
24 been in our County for all the jobs that I've had, so
25 very thankful for that.

1 We also have a small farm. We have
2 cows, horses. And what I've seen with our community
3 is just the values, the core values, and I think the
4 economic growth is just going to be huge to help.

5 I'm excited in all standpoints that
6 Highland County -- that this part of Highland County
7 was chosen for this project, again, for our school
8 systems. I think just being part of the whole
9 renewable energy thing is amazing.

10 I mean, we have been on the maps before
11 for our kids, you know, going to state sports and
12 things. This is going to put us on the map big time.
13 I mean, it's huge.

14 I know from all the research that I've
15 done as well, I've printed articles, I've checked out
16 websites, I believe that Hecate Energy is going to
17 stand true to what they say they are going to do.

18 I mean, I don't see -- I looked at --
19 even today I went to a different website and looked
20 at the projects that they have across the U.S.
21 There's like 34 current projects just for solar.
22 That's not natural gas, that's not the other
23 projects, that's just solar. There are like 18 that
24 are operating.

25 And, you know, when you look at how

1 things are going, I mean, I feel like it is a
2 company -- even though I know they were formed in
3 2012 -- I mean, solar energy is new, these are newer
4 things, but I really feel that what they have to show
5 in support of these projects -- I mean, do the
6 research.

7 I've researched all the questions,
8 everything. Every time I hear a new complaint or
9 concern, I research it. You know, even oncology has
10 a fact sheet out about solar energy.

11 I mean, there's all kinds of information
12 out there. So again, Google it. It's amazing the
13 information you can find.

14 So again, I just really feel that it's a
15 plus for our community. I just think it's a good
16 thing, and I'm glad that we're part of it. So thank
17 you.

18 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Mark Johnson.
19 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
20 truth, the whole truth?

21 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

22 Mark Johnson,
23 presented himself as a public witness, and being
24 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

25 DIRECT TESTIMONY

1 MR. JOHNSON: As he said, my name is
2 Mark Johnson. I'm a business manager for the
3 Tri-State Building Construction Trades. We're an
4 umbrella group of construction units. I cover 33
5 counties in southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and West
6 Virginia, ten counties in southern Ohio, and Highland
7 being one.

8 We have built and maintained just about
9 every power generating facility in our 33 counties.
10 I know all about Dayton Power & Light, Stuart
11 Station, Killen Station.

12 We have -- just about a little over ten
13 years ago we put in what's called FGD scrubbers.
14 Spent millions of dollars on that facility. Our
15 people did the work. Today it's sitting idle, nobody
16 is working there.

17 As a grandson of a West Virginia coal
18 miner, generated power with coal by far generates the
19 most jobs, no doubt about it. The speaker before,
20 absolutely right.

21 A lot of the environmentalists say we're
22 going to replace the coal jobs. They never count the
23 construction workers, the maintenance workers. We're
24 not considered coal jobs, we're considered
25 construction workers.

1 We operate the landfills, we build
2 landfills where fly ash goes. And, you know, I go
3 down into southern West Virginia in the coal fields
4 today, eastern Kentucky, those communities are
5 devastated. There's not much left of the economy.
6 So we have taken a big hit, too.

7 When I first got this job ten years ago
8 we had seven coal-fired powerhouses generating
9 millions of man hours for our people. Today we got
10 three left burning coal; Gavin Plant, Geiger Creek,
11 and Mountaineer in West Virginia.

12 We have done work for American Electric
13 Power, we've done work for Dayton Power & Light, and
14 we have done work for Duke Energy. We built the
15 combined cycle gas plants, we built the peaker
16 plants, we built them all.

17 But today we're in what's called the new
18 economy, and like it or not, that's what we have got.
19 New economy has not been kind to Appalachia. It's --
20 to some degree, the Peabody Coal Company has hauled
21 an awful lot of the jobs away, but this facility
22 here, it's probably the first bright spot of job
23 generation that there is in Appalachia.

24 And when I say "Appalachia", I mean
25 southern Ohio. So we support this facility. We

1 support all power generation. Right now -- I believe
2 we used to -- Ohio used to export energy, we used to
3 export electricity.

4 Burned a lot of coal, too. People mined
5 a lot of coal. Railroads hauled a lot of coal.
6 Barges up and down the Ohio River, the barge facility
7 in Wheelersburg where coal's unloaded off the rails
8 and loaded on barges.

9 But we've got to face reality, it's a
10 new economy. You know, 25 years ago we never thought
11 about it. Today if you don't embrace the new phones,
12 you're not part of the equation anymore. Same way
13 with the internet.

14 Times have changed. The pluses far
15 outweigh the minuses with this facility. I talked to
16 a developer. Our people are going to build this
17 facility. It's going to be jobs, good paying jobs
18 with benefits.

19 We got an initiative to hire Veterans.
20 If you're a Veteran, got an honorable discharge, a
21 DD214, not only -- all you have to do right now
22 today, if this project -- we have got Veterans we
23 want to hire. But even right today, if you just go
24 to helmetstohardhats.org, we want you.

25 A lot of our military people, that's

1 some of the best people in America. If you've
2 already took the test, you've got your DD214, as far
3 as getting this. We are very patriotic people.

4 Go by my front yard and I've got a
5 25-foot flagpole with the American flag flying. It's
6 lighted at night. But I believe in our country, and
7 I believe that it's just the sign of the times.
8 Solar energy is coming whether we want it or not.

9 And like some of the other previous
10 speakers said, if you don't build it in Highland
11 County, somebody else is going to get it and make it
12 closer to Cincinnati, maybe northern Ohio. I want it
13 to be in Appalachia.

14 There's another segment that nobody has
15 mentioned here tonight; a manufacturing segment. In
16 this thing they are going to build a manufacturing
17 facility somewhere in southern Ohio.

18 We're either going to manufacture some
19 components for solar energy, whether it be panels --
20 I really don't know, but it's going to generate -- in
21 the proposal, if I understand it correctly, it will
22 generate a hundred plus jobs, full-time jobs in
23 manufacturing.

24 And up and down the Ohio River, just
25 like I said, the economy has not been fair to the

1 people up and down this river, it's not been fair to
2 Highland County.

3 Out of the last 20 years I've been a
4 representative of the construction union. We have
5 had projects out here, new schools in Hillsboro, we
6 put an addition on this facility probably about 12,
7 13 years ago. Bright got a new school, you know, and
8 Lynchburg.

9 But these are jobs that's going to
10 generate a tax base, and it's going to generate about
11 over 300 construction jobs. Now, they may be
12 temporary jobs.

13 And I don't really like to frame it like
14 a temporary job, because if we get construction trade
15 unions, you've got a career. If you're willing to
16 travel and you've got ambition, you can make a lot of
17 money.

18 I've got a nephew, he went to Wright
19 State, become an electrical engineer. Nothing wrong
20 with that. He's got -- his best friend became an
21 operating engineer. His best friend is in a -- much
22 better economically than my nephew did, and he spent
23 five years in college.

24 But don't get me wrong, I'm not against
25 coal in no shape or form. I would love to be

1 building coal-fired powerhouses up and down the Ohio
2 River, but that's not the way the economy is shaping
3 up today.

4 And so this is what we have got. Solar
5 energy is coming here. You can either embrace it, or
6 you can fight it.

7 But in the future, that's one way that
8 they are going to generate base load power. 300
9 megawatts is a lot of power, and this will be the
10 largest -- my understanding, this will be the largest
11 solar field in the Midwest. That's a big deal. I
12 don't know if people really gave it that much
13 thought.

14 There's a lot of environmental people
15 that's really into solar energy. You might want to
16 come and take a look at it. And I think there's a
17 tourist aspect to this facility.

18 But anyway, I would really, really like
19 to get to the point. I'm all about jobs, all about
20 putting our people to work. I'm all about our
21 country prospering, and this is -- if somebody is
22 coming to spend multi millions of dollars in your
23 community, it doesn't make sense to fight it.

24 You may not like the aesthetics of it,
25 you may not like it period, but it's investing in

1 your community, and it's going to generate a tax
2 revenue, it's going to create jobs, and we want to
3 work as many local people here as possible. And
4 there is a goal to try to get as many people here as
5 possible. And we need good people.

6 But anyway, I want to encourage --
7 accept our support and our testimony as being a
8 hundred percent behind it.

9 We have 17,000 active members in our
10 building trades council. If you count the retirees
11 it's 20,000. And these are people that make a good
12 living. A lot of them are farmers that during
13 farming season, it gets tough making a living on the
14 farm. A lot of our farmers are building trades
15 members.

16 But I understand and I respect the
17 people that is totally against the project. You have
18 that right, and I hope that you respect our right.
19 We need the jobs, we need the investment in the
20 community. And we are 100 percent in favor of this.
21 Thank you.

22 ALJ WALSTRA: Phil Cole. Raise your
23 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
24 whole truth?

25 MR. COLE: Yes.

1 Phil Cole,
2 presented himself as a public witness, and being
3 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 DIRECT TESTIMONY

5 MR. COLE: Good evening. Thank you all
6 for sticking around so long tonight. My name is Phil
7 Cole. I'm the Executive Director of the Ohio
8 Association of Community Action Agencies. And I am
9 here to speak in favor of this solar farm.

10 Let me tell you a little bit about me.
11 The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
12 represents the interests of Ohio's 48 Community
13 Action Agencies that work in all 88 counties in Ohio.

14 We administer over \$600,000,000 of
15 resources in Ohio, aimed at alleviating the problems
16 of poverty throughout the state.

17 We employ over 6,500 people, and we
18 provide service to over 800,000 individual Ohioans,
19 including people in Highland County and in counties
20 adjacent to us.

21 Now, folks, you know I don't have any
22 skin in the game here. When I'm done I'm going back
23 to Columbus, right?

24 But I'm going to tell you, I have
25 watched such great emotion, and I admire all of you

1 that have been here, because all of you care, and
2 that's what counts.

3 People here really want to do what's
4 right for themselves and for the community, and I thank
5 you for that. That's a great thing. But I also want
6 to assure you that no matter what happens, I'm not
7 making any money off of this.

8 Parts of our state have been left behind
9 by the growing and changing economy in Ohio. And as
10 you know, and as we talked about tonight, one of the
11 fastest growing areas of change is the generation of
12 energy.

13 Now, I say I have no skin in the game.
14 My brother was laid off with Dayton Power & Light
15 utility, and my grandfather was a coal miner and he
16 died in the mines. And even though he died there,
17 coal was king in our household because coal powered
18 America.

19 Those days aren't over, but they are
20 coming to an end, as other countries are turning to
21 new energy sources, and Ohio's utilities are turning
22 to new energy sources, too.

23 Now, Ohio can provide these sources of
24 renewable energy, or we can let other states do it,
25 and jobs go with where that energy generation is

1 going to go.

2 Solar is becoming a real source of
3 energy in this state, especially in southern Ohio.
4 In northern Ohio, all you're seeing is wind. Drive
5 through northwest Ohio and see these massive turbines
6 up there. Everybody is going to different sources of
7 energy.

8 A solar farm is clean, it's quiet, it
9 doesn't stink, it doesn't do -- people talk about
10 massive reflection of light. You don't see that
11 stuff. It doesn't happen.

12 It will bring 200 jobs, 300 jobs in
13 construction, as you know, the first year,
14 year-and-a-half. After construction is completed and
15 the farm is operational, there's going to be a small
16 number of permanent jobs. But there will also be
17 those downstream jobs, as they say in the industry.

18 When you have the extra 2 and 3 million
19 dollars that comes with revenue, people get jobs from
20 that. They will go to school, they build roads and
21 bridges, whatever. But people get jobs from that.
22 So there are downstream jobs that go, too.

23 The strong revenue generation from
24 Hecate will go throughout the life of the project, so
25 as you've heard before, it's at least 35 years.

1 But I know Hecate is a quality company,
2 it's run by quality people. And they are doing this
3 in -- they are doing this work in various countries.
4 Folks, they don't need to be in Appalachia; they
5 don't.

6 But they are choosing to do something
7 because they want to provide jobs in Appalachia and
8 be a part of rebuilding that economy in this -- new
9 economy in this part of the State. I admire them for
10 that. And on behalf of my relatives who live in
11 Appalachia, I thank you for that, too.

12 It's been a long night, so I'm going to
13 just close by saying as I travel throughout Ohio I
14 hear a constant concern from officials in our rural
15 areas, and it's the same I hear from fathers and
16 mothers in those areas, and that concern is that
17 their children are leaving.

18 I was at St. Marys not too long ago
19 where they were having a job fair to show their kids
20 why they should be staying in St. Marys, because they
21 are going to Columbus or they are going elsewhere for
22 jobs because there aren't any at home. And as a
23 father of four, I certainly understand that concern.

24 But as a resident of Columbus, I know
25 there's no problem for my children to stay at home,

1 because central Ohio is where most of the job growth
2 is happening.

3 Ohio needs to build a new economy in our
4 rural areas, too, so that our children don't need to
5 leave home to find employment. This project is a
6 step forward to help build future economy and jobs
7 for Highland County, and I hope the Power Siting
8 Board approves this project. Thank you very much.

9 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Jeff Powell.
10 Jeff Powell.

11 (No response.)

12 ALJ WALSTRA: Ed Fryman. Raise your
13 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
14 whole truth?

15 MR. FRYMAN: Yes.

16 Ed Fryman,
17 presented himself as a public witness, and being
18 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 DIRECT TESTIMONY

20 MR. FRYMAN: My name is Ed Fryman. I
21 live out here on 321. These solar panels are not
22 going to touch my farm, but the runoff will, and I am
23 very concerned about that.

24 The amount of farmland that this is
25 getting rid of -- they are not making farmland

1 anymore, and the amount they are taking is excessive,
2 in my opinion.

3 And we have also had a lot of high
4 ranking people come and tell us why we should keep
5 it. It won't affect them one bit. But I really do
6 not think this amount of solar panels should be built
7 right here.

8 And job creations, I understand it's
9 going to be 15. It may be several for a short time.
10 And another thing. To my knowledge -- I don't know
11 if it's true or not -- but all of the energy this
12 solar system is going to create will be going to the
13 State of New York. It's not going to benefit us at
14 all, one bit, it's being shipped out of state. And
15 whether that's true or not, I don't know. But that's
16 my understanding.

17 And I just want to -- people say that we
18 might be upset because we're not one asked to sell.
19 Well, I wouldn't have sold if I was asked, because
20 I've been asked before.

21 And another thing, I am an old history
22 guy. If my farm was three or four or five
23 generations deep, there's no way in the world I would
24 ever sell it. Thank you.

25 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. I apologize if

1 I'm misreading this, Bundy Bruger Barger. Raise your
2 right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the
3 whole truth?

4 MS. BARGER: Yes.

5 Cindy Barger,
6 presented herself as a public witness, and being
7 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

8 DIRECT TESTIMONY

9 MS. BARGER: My name is Cindy Barger and
10 I live on Hess Road. I'm here to express my concerns
11 about the plans for this solar farm known as the
12 project, which will swallow up 3,400 acres of our
13 beautiful countryside here in Highland County.

14 I have many concerns about this project,
15 but I will begin with the potential of polluting the
16 water and soil.

17 We sit on top of a large aquifer which
18 feeds our well, which has the potential to be
19 contaminated with toxic chemicals and heavy metals if
20 the panels were damaged and leak due to natural or
21 unexpected causes such as storms, falling trees, or
22 larger animals such as deer damaging them.

23 I want to know, what's the response time
24 for replacing it and cleanup if the panels are
25 damaged, and who and how are the water restored to

1 the pristine condition making it safe to drink or
2 bathe in?

3 We also have White Oak Creek at the back
4 of our property. The runoff from many areas
5 indicated as the project run directly or indirectly
6 into this creek. It too would suffer if leakage
7 should occur.

8 The chemicals released from damaged
9 solar panels are as follows: Cadmium telluride,
10 which is highly toxic and a known carcinogen.

11 Copper indium selenide. Exposure to
12 this causes kidney or liver pathology or complete
13 failure.

14 Cadmium Indium Gallium Selenide. Until
15 the '90s, little was known about the health effects
16 of this, but in the mid '90s, in animal studies, it
17 was clearly demonstrated that indium compounds cause
18 pulmonary toxicity, and that the dissolution in the
19 lungs is considerably slow, thereby creating the
20 necessity for greater attention to human exposure
21 with regard to health management.

22 Silicon Tetrachloride. This causes
23 skin, eye, and respiratory irritations. If inhaled,
24 it will cause breathing difficulties.

25 Are there plans in place to periodically

1 test the soil and water for toxic chemicals and heavy
2 metals? What plans are there to protect against soil
3 erosions, stream protection, and water quality? And
4 if toxic and heavy metals are found in the soil
5 and/or water, what are your plans for the cleanup?

6 Then there's the harm to wildlife and
7 habitat. The proposed farm will take up a lot of
8 space which can result in an environmental
9 degradation and habitat loss.

10 Solar farms that cover a large amount of
11 land are likely to have an impact on the local fauna
12 (animals), and flora (plants), particularly on birds.

13 The Ivanpah Solar Generating System in
14 California's Mojave Desert clearly underestimated the
15 number of desert tortoises that would be displaced,
16 and came under scrutiny when an increasing number of
17 bird deaths were reported on its premises. Many of
18 the wings had been melted or burned off by heat from
19 the solar farm's mirrors.

20 What are your estimates of the loss of
21 birds and wildlife due to the project?

22 I have just noticed return of the quail
23 in this area, and would not want them harmed. I also
24 have ducks and Canadian geese which return to my pond
25 each year, not to mention a lot of white tailed deer,

1 which I do not want harmed or driven away.

2 When solar farms harm or remove species
3 within a habitat, they also remove the valuable
4 ecosystem services that they provide to the habitat.

5 The habitat becomes less livable for
6 plants and wildlife that have adapted to its specific
7 conditions.

8 Then there's the risks. Fire is a risk
9 with this operation if weeds, shrubs, grass, and
10 trees are not maintained. What plans have been made
11 for maintenance of those areas, and how often will
12 they be inspected?

13 Also nests from birds, insects, and
14 small animals may cause fires as the solar panels are
15 more prone to lightening strikes. What fire codes
16 will apply to this structure?

17 Are the firefighters and others aware
18 that a fire on-site may place them in risk of
19 electrocution? Will there be a perimeter fence or
20 vegetative buffer zone around all areas of the farm?

21 What are the plans for transformer
22 leakage, as it can cause land contamination and other
23 risks? To prevent fatal errors with transformer
24 leakage, has a parameter range been set and automatic
25 alarms issued to check on the site before the problem

1 escalates?

2 No one talks about the decommissioning,
3 either. At some point -- and it's known that the
4 solar panels are good for about 25 years. At some
5 point, whether by choice or by default, the solar
6 panels and equipment will need to be removed.

7 If the farm does not produce power for a
8 period of 12 months, or if it's not repairable or
9 replaceable, will it be decommissioned? And what is
10 the time frame for removing all panels and equipment
11 upon decommissioning?

12 Then the problem comes in with the
13 disposal of the panels. I'm getting a dry mouth
14 here.

15 The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
16 warns the solar industry to face its e-waste head on
17 or risk repeating the same mistakes made by the
18 microelectronics industry.

19 The Coalition warns that panel
20 production creates many of the same toxic byproducts
21 as those found in the semiconductor production,
22 including silicon tetrachloride, dust, and greenhouse
23 gases like sulfur hexafluoride.

24 Silicon tetrachloride, for example,
25 makes land unsuitable for growing crops. And for

1 each time polysilicon is produced, four tons of
2 silicon tetrachloride are generated.

3 Are you aware that the solar panels
4 create 300 times more toxic waste per unit of energy
5 than do nuclear power plants?

6 You see, I care not only for myself, but
7 for others, and for our water and soil. How do you
8 plan on disposing of the decommissioned panels as it
9 affects my children, my grandchildren, and my great
10 grandchildren?

11 Then there's the question of property
12 devaluation. I'm also concerned that my property
13 will drop in value because this solar farm is
14 aesthetically unappealing compared to the beauty of
15 the countryside now.

16 I moved here 25 years ago for the beauty
17 of the land, all the animals and birds that were
18 present here, and the beauty of the farms and
19 farmland.

20 With the advent of this project, this
21 will become a memory. The farms will be gone, the
22 habitat will change causing the animals to seek a new
23 environment that is conducive to their needs, and I
24 fear the land and waters will be polluted. Please do
25 not let this happen.

1 ALJ WALSTRA: Ron and Rochelle Sams.

2 Ron and Rochelle Sams?

3 (No response.)

4 ALJ WALSTRA: Mark Edelburg. I'm not
5 sure if I'm reading this right, so if it's close,
6 Mark Edelburg. Move on.

7 Dustin Bohl? Raise your right hand. Do
8 you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth?

9 MR. BOHL: Yes.

10 Dustin Bohl,
11 presented himself as a public witness, and being
12 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

13 DIRECT TESTIMONY

14 MR. BOHL: My name is Dustin Bohl. I am
15 a local resident. I live on Winkle Road. My family
16 farm does not -- is not associated or directly
17 associated with the land sighted for the solar
18 panels.

19 However, I do live downstream from them.
20 My family has operated a dairy farm since the mid
21 1900s. My ancestry moved here in the middle 1800s,
22 and helped develop this community.

23 I am concerned about runoff. Yes, I
24 know there's been topics said about grass being sown
25 and everything, but when you're considering a three

1 or four-inch downpour in two to three hours, like we
2 have had, there's going to be a lot of runoff.

3 When you're having surfaces that is
4 horizontal to, say a high wind when they are
5 horizontal, there will be a lot of tension brought
6 along in one area.

7 I'm also concerned about possible toxins
8 or poisons that may enter our stream during
9 construction and operation. We do water our
10 livestock off Bells Run Creek, which is mainly
11 developed almost in the center part of this
12 development that's proposed. I am, like I said,
13 concerned about that.

14 It is hard to find a true, honest answer
15 on the internet. I've searched. You got things for
16 it, and things against it, you know, saying there is
17 toxins, there's not toxins. Again, I don't know
18 which one to believe. But I am concerned.

19 As I said, my family has operated a
20 dairy farm here off of State Route 221, about a half
21 mile outside of town. Area facilities are
22 susceptible to stray voltage. This is a major
23 concern to us. We have had issues in the past with
24 AEP with stray voltage.

25 We had to buy a special isolator that we

1 had to pay over \$2,000 for, for our operation. That
2 was put onto the commercial line just to try to
3 correct stray voltage.

4 Also, another possibility of hurting our
5 facility is the fact that the radio waves that could
6 possibly generate off of this large facility.

7 I'm not against solar power, that will
8 probably be the future, but when solar power disturbs
9 this many acreages in one location, that is an issue.

10 I myself am a farmer. I'll farm the
11 rest of my life, God willing. I'm planning to dairy
12 farm all my life, God willing.

13 But anyway, I have learned about this.
14 You know, when you're talking about this many
15 acreage, there's going to be several hundred
16 thousands of dollars or more of ag sales lost due to
17 seed customers, chemical orders, some tractor sales
18 could also be lost. That hurts the community.

19 You know, like I said, it's not a bad
20 thing, solar panels, but when you have a facility
21 this large -- and I have heard that this location,
22 though they say it's the sunniest place this Ohio --
23 which is hard to believe in the last few years -- but
24 they say this location is the sunniest place in Ohio;
25 however, this -- I don't know about this company, but

1 these solar proposed plans have been made in other
2 counties with higher real estate prices, so to me,
3 they chose this area for the real estate cost because
4 our land is not as high valued as, say, Madison
5 County, where I don't know whether it was proposed or
6 not.

7 For the most part, like I said, I am not
8 for it. I feel that it is going to take away from
9 our community. Like someone said -- or a neighbor
10 said, God does not make any more land.

11 You take away 3,000 plus acres of land
12 that could be developed on, you lose people. When
13 you lose people, you lose attendance in school. One
14 of the true moneymakers to school is attendance. You
15 get paid by the amount of students that participate
16 in your school. That is a state guarantee.

17 When you start losing participation or
18 attendance to school, you will start losing your
19 school. Yes, there will be an instant income,
20 supposedly, but down the road, where is that income
21 going to go if there's no students to go to school?

22 For that, just on a side note, like I
23 said, I've lived in this community all my life. My
24 wife -- I married my wife almost eight years ago, and
25 she's my neighbor. Her family also has been part of

1 this community.

2 I'm not going to speak on her behalf,
3 however she has been here -- or like I said, her
4 family has been part of this community. And when I
5 was a little boy I saw some farmers who go by on big
6 tractors, I looked up to them. Today I'm not sure if
7 I can. Thank you.

8 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Charles
9 Davidson. Charles Davidson.

10 (No response.)

11 ALJ WALSTRA: John McDermott.

12 MR. MC DERMOTT: Probably made a fool of
13 myself all night, so I apologize.

14 ALJ WALSTRA: Raise your right hand. Do
15 you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth?

16 MR. MC DERMOTT: Yes.

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

20 DIRECT TESTIMONY

21 MR. MC DERMOTT: I'll get to it quick,
22 unlike some of the people here. No offense. So
23 anyways, if we look at the map for our case stats,
24 I'm looking at all the sites.

25 You know, there's about ten-some

1 pending, only three of them approved. 300 megawatts,
2 that's the biggest one not yet approved. So 275
3 people, 300, 10,000 -- could be 10,000 some day.

4 They are building solar systems in the
5 tri-state, in California. We could teach California
6 how to build solar panel systems.

7 Wind turbines in the middle of Lake
8 Erie, eight miles off the shoreline, these are all
9 possibilities that they could really learn. We could
10 teach the world how to build renewable energy.

11 And if you don't believe that, 300 is
12 bigger than 150, 300 is bigger than 170, 300 is
13 bigger than 125. This is the biggest system pending.
14 And that's the big word.

15 And I got a cellphone right here. Do
16 you know how many components, if I tried to break
17 this apart in front of you guys? That's called
18 reverse energy. You can't tear apart a combine and
19 start working on it yourself, or you lose the
20 warranty. That's just the facts.

21 So when we look at this book written by
22 some people much smarter than I could ever be -- and
23 I bought it from the community college -- and learned
24 a lot more than I ever did at a four-year
25 university -- I'm just saying those are facts I can

1 speak about.

2 I look at page 423 of this Electrical
3 Motors and Control Systems taken for a trades course,
4 and they talk about DC power supply components.

5 If you think about that little thing you
6 plug into -- before you plug that little thing in the
7 wall, and then you plug a little cord, that's your
8 little transmission line going to your battery in
9 your phone to make phone calls and whatnot.

10 There's a transformer that changes that
11 power from the wall, you know, and goes into a
12 rectifier; that little block. Does all kind of crazy
13 things that people in this book know much more about
14 than, like I said, I ever could, but it gets to your
15 phone.

16 So how does an AC power in your wall go
17 to DC and charge your phone? I mean, that's just
18 science. It's craziness. But we use Smart phones
19 every day. And if you say I'm a liar, I call you a
20 double liar, because you do.

21 So how can a 300-megawatt solar system
22 teach the world how to install these things? Well, I
23 think I just proved that point, because we're using
24 phones every day. And it's the kids that know how to
25 teach you how to download your email to your

1 computer, and they never went to school for it, they
2 just use it every day.

3 So there's a lot of interesting things
4 they handed out today, and most of you people will
5 throw it away instead of recycling. Not my problem.

6 But what is interesting about some of
7 these maps is they talk about Lima transmitting power
8 to Detroit where your car has been built, talking
9 about the Akron area, which powers Pittsburgh, who
10 also reinvented itself.

11 Their colors are black and yellow
12 because they are coal and gold, the coal that they
13 dug up from places like Mount Washburn and they turn
14 it into gold. And that's how they built their city.

15 So Akron powered Pittsburgh, Lima
16 powered Detroit, and those cities are in Ohio. So
17 where is Morwystown going to power? Well, it could
18 maybe not power anybody. It could shut down. And we
19 don't got coal anymore in this state because
20 Appalachia is dry, bone cold dry.

21 So, you know, all the people that spoke
22 today, I hope everything that's been said is
23 considered in order of importance, you know. Some
24 people have their points than others, and that's your
25 opinion.

1 So, you know, I don't have a job. I'm
2 not worried about it because we got a support system
3 in this country that helps people that are searching
4 for a job. And that's a good thing.

5 So you might think what I'm saying is
6 inaccurate and wrong, and I should shut the heck up.
7 But I got a few more minutes to speak on. I'm going
8 to use that time wisely.

9 I grew up in a middle class family. My
10 parents worked tirelessly, meaning they wanted to
11 move forward. They didn't want to pay for my
12 studies anymore.

13 I took on a lot of college debt, and all
14 I have is an Associate's Degree. And when you got
15 60K in debt and a two-year degree, you been studying
16 for 12 years, that math doesn't add up, and it
17 doesn't add up for me either.

18 So when you're sitting on a black tarp,
19 just imagine that being a bunch of solar panels, but
20 all the red baskets around here is still a lot more
21 land.

22 And there's a lot of land to be eaten up
23 by the City of Columbus. All that land has been
24 developed, and so if you think there's a problem with
25 developing farmland in this town, one percent of the

1 land, imagine how much is being eaten up every second
2 by a bull dozer that's, for generations and
3 generations and generations even further down the
4 line, used to be farm territory.

5 So if you want to think about how much
6 land is being eaten up and polluted and stuff like
7 that, think about the Cuyahoga River being on fire 50
8 years ago this year.

9 So it's a lot bigger problem than just
10 your backyard. It is. It's the world catching on
11 fire. By 2100 the Department of Defense says there
12 won't be no food in the world. 2100, I'll be dead by
13 then, but there is a lot of people that will be dead
14 because they can't get food, and that's the
15 Department of Defense, DOD. That's not liar tellers.

16 And you think about 5,000 jobs in
17 construction. It's not 5,000 jobs for solar and
18 wind; it's just not. It's training the world how
19 this place does business, because we're a lot smarter
20 than a lot of those city buildings and whatnot.

21 So there's thin panelled solar being
22 manufactured in Toledo. We can take that factory
23 down here and say shut it down Toledo, we know how to
24 do it better.

25 How many of you got roofs where you

1 can't put solar panels because it's too heavy and the
2 wind load is too much? Put a thin filmed solar panel
3 on it. They make them in Toledo. And that's a good
4 manufacturing place.

5 So people talk about there's not going
6 to be any grass around solar panels. Well, plant
7 some grass. You guys can plant corn and soybeans.
8 Can't you plant grass? I think you can. You can do
9 it better than anybody can.

10 What's going to mow it? Goats and
11 lambs. And they do it in France, a longtime ally
12 that we protected during World War II. And they
13 helped us out other times, too. They are an ally in
14 the wartime.

15 So with all that said, you know, France
16 has figured out how to help the farmers, and even pay
17 for the solar panels. And those things look clean
18 and mean, they don't look old school. And they help
19 out farmers in France, a longtime ally.

20 So why is our area only a bread basket?
21 That's because all we grow, and all we can afford to
22 grow, is corn and soybeans to feed cows, not to
23 really feed families, you know. Those cows and
24 chickens and lambs and pigs, those are things that
25 feed families, and everybody knows that. Pork is the

1 other white meat.

2 So with that said, you know, a person
3 like myself with a jillion hours of college credit,
4 but the way I lived it myself out of poverty, off
5 Medicaid, never took a dime of food stamps or
6 anything like that, too proud and stuff, all I can
7 get is a \$10 and \$12 job and no benefits, and that's
8 the future of a person my age.

9 Go to Taco Bell and tell me I'm a liar.
10 It's a 16 year old kid that would rather cuss you out
11 about my taco wasn't made right. Well, go make a
12 taco yourself at home then.

13 So with that said, I'm going to end it
14 by saying we can't be a bread basket anymore, because
15 when summers get hotter, and they are, and winters
16 get longer -- not really -- but they get colder,
17 catch bronchitis real quick in the polar vortex,
18 let's think about being a tomato basket where you can
19 have these high intensity farms that need a lot of
20 electricity.

21 Well, how can you power a tomato
22 factory, basically? Think about that one. Can you
23 have a chicken factory that you got to put all your
24 eggs in one basket and carry the eggs to your house
25 or to the market? You could. How would you power a

1 chicken factory and an egg factory? Think about
2 that.

3 And you need lambs and cows and all
4 these kind of animals to mow the grass around the
5 solar field, catch all that water, and catch all the
6 crazy metals that you all were talking about. You
7 could do it with animals.

8 Slaughter them, get the wool off the
9 sheep and the lambs and stuff like that, and make a
10 ton of money. So if you're thinking small potatoes
11 about a few jobs now, think about the bigger picture.
12 Thank you.

13 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Michael
14 McCarty. Just a few more, everybody. Thank you for
15 being patient.

16 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to
17 tell the truth, the whole truth?

18 MR. MC CARTY: Yes.

19 ALJ WALSTRA: Go ahead.

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

23 DIRECT TESTIMONY

24 MR. MC CARTY: My name is Michael
25 McCarty, and I have a business in Hillsboro. About

1 the end of last year we got a call from one of our
2 longtime acquaintances and former clients from White
3 Oak Township saying that he had a contact to sell his
4 farm and needed help, needed to have an American Land
5 Title Association survey completed.

6 That meeting led to other discussions,
7 and eventually that person introduced us to the
8 people at Hecate Energy, who were the purchasers of,
9 it turns out, multiple parcels including his.

10 We were fortunate enough to be able to
11 work out a services agreement with Hecate and
12 provided surveys for the properties that are
13 considered part of this project.

14 The thing that I can add here is I'm one
15 of the few people here who have now had three or four
16 months of weekly associations with the staff at
17 Hecate.

18 I find those people to be very
19 competent, very straightforward. When they see
20 something that's wrong, they actually support that.
21 I think we're fortunate to have them as the potential
22 developer for the project in that I think that we're
23 dealing with a topnotch company that is going to do
24 right by all the people that end up working for them.

25 So you know, I hope that the project

1 will be able to go forward, and I would think that
2 all of you should look forward to getting to meet and
3 work with the people from Hecate Energy. Thank you.

4 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Becky Geiger.
5 Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the
6 truth, the whole truth?

7 MS. GEIGER: Yes.

8 Becky Geiger,
9 presented herself as a public witness, and being
10 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

11 DIRECT TESTIMONY

12 MS. GEIGER: I'm going to address my
13 comments to the Board. I was born in Highland
14 County, raised in Highland County, went to school in
15 Highland County. There's a terrible lack of
16 opportunity in Highland County.

17 I run a business that I operate in parts
18 of Highland County. I'm an electrical contractor,
19 and part of my business is I go to schools all
20 throughout the tri-state. I can tell you that the
21 difference between our schools and the schools I see
22 in the city, big difference.

23 They have science and technology labs
24 that our kids don't have access to here. We have
25 clean schools and we have nice teachers. We have

1 teachers that go to their hip pocket when kids don't
2 have school supplies. They take the money out of
3 their own household to buy for the kids that can't
4 bring them.

5 We have kids that show up hungry, that
6 don't have breakfast in the morning. Very
7 economically depressed area. This could do a lot for
8 our community, and I hope you approve it.

9 ALJ WALSTRA: Thank you. Jorge Cruz?
10 Mr. Cruz?

11 (No response.)

12 ALJ WALSTRA: Rick Emery. You're the
13 last on the list. Raise your right hand. Do you
14 swear to tell the truth, the whole truth?

15 MR. EMERY: I do.

16 Rick Emery,
17 presented himself as a public witness, and being
18 first duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 DIRECT TESTIMONY

20 MR. EMERY: Rick Emery. I'm from a
21 large town two miles of here. Anybody that says
22 solar panels are in the home, I'd like to meet with
23 you after the meeting because I'd like to know what
24 that's like.

25 I'm going to have panels all the way

1 around my home. Do I really want that? Not really.
2 I like the cows and corn and beans. But if they are
3 going to be, I have a challenge, and it's the only
4 reason I'm saying anything tonight.

5 For me, if you're going to allow me to
6 live in solar panels, I challenge this community,
7 please, to make sure that they do what they say they
8 are going to do.

9 Dale Arnold talked about the grass, the
10 water, natural resources. All these things sound
11 magnificent. My challenge to each and every one of
12 you is to make sure you're right. That's what I ask.

13 I also challenge the School Board and
14 trustees, Commissioners, PUCO, any government entity
15 that is involved in this, to make sure that the tax
16 money flows, because we're all talking about the tax
17 money. And that is fantastic, but I challenge you to
18 make sure it flows and it comes and it gets to where
19 it's supposed to, please.

20 Because I'm going to live there in that
21 solar panel field, I just ask that you do that for
22 me, and for our community, because all this will mean
23 nothing if that doesn't happen. Thank you.

24 ALJ WALSTRA: I do want to thank
25 everyone for coming out, thank you for your patience.

1 I know it was a long night.

2 We do have the adjudicatory hearing,
3 which is the 26th. All the comments here are being
4 transcribed. They should be on the docket -- usually
5 it's about two or three weeks before you can read all
6 the comments of many of you tonight.

7 They will all be submitted to the Power
8 Siting Board before making a decision. And after
9 that, we are concluded. Thanks again, guys.

10 (Thereupon, the hearing was
11 adjourned at 8:50 p.m.)

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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 Tuesday, March 19, 2019, and carefully compared with my original stenographic notes.


Valerie J. Grubaugh,
Court Reporter and Notary
Public in and for the State
of Ohio.

My commission expires August 11, 2021.



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Case No(s). 18-1334-EL-BGN

Summary: Transcript In the Matter of the Application of Hecate Energy Highland, LLC, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for an Electric Generating Facility in Morwystwon, Highland County, hearing held on March 19th, 2019. electronically filed by Mr. Ken Spencer on behalf of Armstrong & Okey, Inc. and Grubaugh, Valerie