

**BEFORE THE  
OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Application of	)	
Firelands Winds, LLC for a Certificate of	)	Case No. 18-1607-EL-BGN
Environmental Compatibility and Public	)	
Need to Construct a Wind-Powered Electric	)	
Generation Facility in Huron and Erie	)	
Counties, Ohio	)	

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF**

**Tom Yingling  
Woodside Farms, Inc.**

**on the behalf of**

**Tom Yingling**

**September 21, 2020**

/s/ Hillary Aidun  
Hillary Aidun (PHV-21990-2020)  
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*Counsel for Kevin Erf and Tom Yingling*

1   **Q-1. Please state your name, current title, and business address.**

2   **A-1.** My name is Tom Yingling. I am the half owner and president of Woodside Farms,  
3       Inc., located at 6247 Young Road, Bellevue, OH 44811.

4   **Q-2. How long have you lived in Bellevue?**

5   **A-2.** I have lived in the same community for my whole life. In fact, I live a half mile  
6       down the road from where I was born. I am a fourth generation landowner in this  
7       community, and my children will be fifth generation landowners. One of my  
8       daughters is a schoolteacher in Bellevue and the other is a band director in  
9       Loudonville. My son is a chemical engineer in Columbus. I have two  
10      grandchildren in Bellevue schools.

11   **Q-3. What is your occupation?**

12   **A-3.** I am a fourth-generation farmer. Woodside Farms, Inc. is a family-owned and  
13      operated business located in Bellevue, Ohio. I co-own the farm with my brother  
14      and mother. My brother and I are responsible for overseeing the farm and for day-  
15      to-day operations. My wife does bookkeeping. We currently produce corn and  
16      soybeans.

17               When I graduated from high school in 1980 my family had a hog farm,  
18      which grew throughout the 1990s. Then the livestock market collapsed. The  
19      industry has become more vertically integrated, and in 2002 we decided to exit  
20      the industry rather than become a breeding unit for a big feed mill. We did indoor  
21      fish production for twelve years, but the margins were really tight. Now we  
22      mostly lose money on corn, but soybeans are a better cash crop. We are always  
23      splitting hairs over whether we make money.

24   **Q-4. What has been your involvement in the community?**

25   **A-4.** I am active in my church and have participated in raising money for a new  
26      hospital. I have been active in the schools, but am now in more of a grandparent  
27      role.

28   **Q-5. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

1   **A-5.** I am testifying in support of the Emerson Creek Wind Farm because I believe it  
2       will bring benefits to my family and my community.

3   **Q-6. In your opinion, what are those benefits?**

4   **A-6.** We are in a very rural area where the economy has been stagnant for the past  
5       fifteen years. The manufacturing we have in Bellevue is mostly not high tech.  
6       Bellevue also suffers from brain drain – a lot of talent moves to Columbus.  
7       Anything we can do to create jobs and expand local revenue is a wonderful asset  
8       to the community. Extra income coming into school facilities will also be  
9       wonderfully appreciated and directly benefit kids.

10           Wind farms also bring outside income into rural farming communities,  
11       and allow independent-minded farmers to stay independent by providing an  
12       additional source of income. New income allows people to take debt pressure off,  
13       and it makes payments easier. Everyone in agriculture is looking for niche income  
14       where we can make some extra money. Everybody is feeling financial stress.  
15       Some farmers are going out of business. A windmill generating income takes a lot  
16       of pressure off the bottom line without requiring a lot of investment. And we still  
17       get to farm the land since a windmill has a small footprint. An extra income  
18       stream not related to farming also provides stability in rough times. It would allow  
19       some farmers to stay in business, and others to have the next generation continue.

20           If the project is approved, the wind lease that my brother and I signed will  
21       make a big difference for us. It would pay for our medical insurance; a lot of  
22       farmers work off the farm jobs for benefits because farmers cannot cover  
23       insurance. The lease will not pay for a new car or a vacation, but it will take some  
24       pressure off.

25   **Q-7. In your opinion, are there other benefits to having a wind farm in the area?**

26   **A-8.** I also support wind energy because of its climate benefits. Climate change is  
27       impacting everything we do every day. Everything is unpredictable, and  
28       unpredictability leads to income instability. It is much harder to plan and forecast.  
29       Our weather events are getting more extreme. Hots are hotters and colds are  
30       colder. And now you either get 1-3 inches of rain or nothing. The variation from

1           one farm to the next is also huge. Now we also have new insects and new weeds.  
2           A consistent income stream provided by a wind lease is especially appealing  
3           because of the instability caused by climate change.

4   **Q-8. Does this conclude your testimony?**

5   **A-8.** Yes. However, I reserve the right to update this testimony to respond to any  
6           further testimony in this case.

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The Ohio Power Siting Board's e-filing system will electronically serve notice of the filing this document on the parties referenced in the service list of the docket card who have electronically subscribed to this case. In addition, the undersigned certifies that a copy of the foregoing document is also being served upon the persons listed below this 21st day of September, 2020.

/s/ Hillary Aidun

Hillary Aidun (PHV-21990-2020)

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Summary: Testimony of Tom Yingling electronically filed by Ms. Hillary W. Aidun on behalf of Yingling, Tom Mr.