

Gina Rought  
30000 Phelps Road  
West Mansfield, OH 43358

October 23, 2020

Ohio Power Siting Board  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215  
CASE NUMBER: 20-1405-EL-BGN: Union Solar

Gentlemen:

I am a 25-year resident of Union County and am seriously concerned about the solar energy project that has been proposed to, and accepted by, several farmers in our county. This has not been publicly announced and the only way I heard about it is from two neighbors who have signed contracts to lease their land. Considering this is going to affect all the residents surrounding these eyesores, I believe this was intentional and very underhanded.

Union County is not ideal for solar farms considering the lack of sun we have annually. Ohio averages 72 days per year. That is 19.73%. And the ground is clay based which causes problems with drainage. We didn't even build a basement in our home 25 years ago due to the poor quality of the soil. The fields around us that do not have tile installed to assist in the drainage and prohibit erosion look like ponds when we get a heavy rain. Add to that the fact that in order to erect these solar panels they must drill deep into the fields, thereby compromising any tile system, all surrounding farmland is going to be negatively affected. And what happens if and when the foreign company promoting these solar farms goes bankrupt? Who is responsible for removing the panels and repairing the tile?

Ohio agriculture is crucial to putting food on the plates of Americans and supports an infinite number of jobs and businesses locally, nationally and internationally. Most businesses in Union County, along with surrounding counties, depend on farmers and agriculture to be successful. We are also losing thousands of acres due to urban sprawl. When we moved out here there were only two flashing lights between Marysville and our home. Now there are no fewer than 4 stoplights within the first mile of Rt. 33 and Rt. 31. Thousands of homes have been built on what used to be a dairy farm and they are creeping closer and closer by the day. Now with this proposal, thousands more acres of valuable farmland will be converted to solar energy panels.

To add insult to injury those of us who must look at these eyesores (did I mention they are surrounding these monstrosities with a chain link fence?) won't even benefit from the energy produced from these solar panels. They will supply energy to New York and New Jersey at our expense. Then there is the issue with toxicity. Not only do they cause blight to vegetation and disrupt wildlife, but they are made with cadmium, a carcinogen that leaches into soil and groundwater according to researchers from the Institute for Photovoltaics in Stuttgart, Germany. They found that "contrary to previous assumptions, pollutants such as lead or carcinogenic cadmium can be almost completely washed out of the fragments of solar modules over a period of several months, for example by rainwater."

Solar panels not only consume thousands of acres of viable farmland, they also consume that much land and more when they no longer can function and they become toxic waste. The

location of where that toxic waste will be dumped has yet to be decided. This is a far cry from a “green, clean”, no-fail energy proposal. I have heard that the solar panel fields in Clyde, Ohio are already faulty and disabled.

Please consider the following points when deciding the fate of thousands of acres in Union County:

- The solar energy companies claim that they will bring jobs and revenue to Union County. Most of those jobs will be temporary until the solar panels are built and in place and then only a few employees will be needed to “maintain” the fields.
- Take into consideration the jobs and revenue lost due to solar fields taking the place of thousands of acres of farming/agriculture. There are many small farming operations that would gladly lease this land to farm rather than have it cluttered with solar panels.
- The businesses that will be negatively impacted by the solar fields, directly and indirectly, are innumerable. Businesses that would take a direct hit are implement companies, grain elevators, equipment mechanics, crop insurance companies, truckers, seed companies, car and truck dealers, tile and drainage businesses. Agriculture is undeniably a big industry that creates a huge, important ripple effect to businesses and the quality of life within a community and beyond.
- The lack of sunshine in Ohio, averaging 70 sunny days/year.
- The fact that a solar company from Spain can secretly come into our county and lease 2600+ acres of farmland and put solar panels on it without public knowledge or local government knowledge, approval or input until the deal is well underway and sealed. This is an underhanded way to do business, and gives me no solace that they will stand by any of their claims to maintain and remove the panels.
- There are currently 80 million people in the United States suffering from hunger while solar panels are being approved to eat up thousands of acres of farm ground that grows FOOD. That land will be controlled by the solar companies for with **30+ years with the option to add another 20 years to the lease.** Why not put the solar panels where food cannot be grown? Idea locations would be government owned ground out west, old landfills, the desert, malls that are no longer occupied, and on top of buildings in cities.
- Why do the solar companies lease the land instead of purchasing the land? Could it be because they know the land will be worth much less when the company goes bankrupt and the land is littered with glass, concrete, cadmium and miles of wire?
- Why wasn't the community informed in the early stages of this project?
- Who is responsible for disposal of the panels along with the wiring, glass and toxic waste that goes with them when they no longer work? Where do they dispose of this waste?
- Who is subsidizing these projects and enticing them to come to Ohio?
- Who approved this project? Was there a legislator or a panel of elected officials that initially approved it?
- Where does the money come from to pay the landowners the promised \$1,000.00 per acre per year for 30+ years to lease their land to solar energy companies?
- Is this project subsidized with government money, aka, our tax dollars?
- What is the life expectancy of the solar panels? Everything has a life expectancy.
- Who is responsible to fix the untold acres of drainage tile when it is destroyed by the construction of the solar panel fields?
- How will the solar fields impact surrounding land value?
- Is it fair to those who have to live by these eye sores? I find it interesting that not one person who has signed contracts has done so with property within the site of their home.
- What kind of impact do solar panel fields have on wildlife, water and the environment?
- What happens when the solar company goes bankrupt or out of business? What recourse do landowners have to recoup their losses? (Think Solyndra.)

- Is there a limit to how much ground solar companies can consume in one township, county or state?
- The solar companies have promised to “put the land back the way it was before”, when they are done “using” it. Read between those lines. The fact that they must make that kind of promise, says it all. They are violating the land and taking advantage of the people in our community and they know it.

The solar companies have nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking and using our precious land. They have no vested interest, no emotional attachment. I personally may not be a farmer, but my father designed and built, along with my husband, all of the structures on our property. This is my dad's legacy. Our kids grew up here. I would like to leave it to them without the burden of looking out the front window to view the eyesore of a solar farm surrounded by a chain link fence. Not to mention the reduced property value that these farms will certainly bring. We have everything to lose.

The people of Union County and Ohio deserve answers to these questions before a final decision is made. We deserve to weigh-in on the decisions that will impact our land, our water, our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

As you enjoy a meal today, and every day, made possible by Ohio farmers, please consider what is really at stake here. Consider these questions and the honest answers to them as you make a decision on behalf of the people of the great state of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Gina K. Rought

cc: Union County Commissioners  
233 W. 6th St.  
Marysville, OH. 43040

Governor Mike DeWine  
77 S. High Street  
Riffe Center, 30th Floor  
Columbus, OH. 43215-6117

Rep. Tracy M. Richardson, Ohio House of Representatives - District 86  
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor  
Columbus, OH. 43215

U. S. Congressman Jim Jordan  
2056 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

**10/26/2020 10:09:01 AM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 20-1405-EL-BGN**

Summary: Public Comment Public Comment filed by Gina K. Rought submitted via website electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing