

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

In the Matter of the Application of)	
Big Plain Solar, LLC for a)	
Certificate of Environmental)	Case No. 19-1823-EL-BGN
Compatibility and Public Need)	

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF MARK J. BONIFAS

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

A.1. My name is Mark J. Bonifas. I am a Civil Engineering Practice Leader/Principal at Hull & Associates, Inc. My business address is 6397 Emerald Parkway, Suite 200, Dublin, OH 43016.

Q.2. What are your duties as a Civil Engineering Practice Leader/Principal?

A.2. As the Civil Engineering Practice Leader, I manage civil engineering, renewable energy and land development projects in multiple states providing creative strategies to secure funding, meet regulatory requirements and streamline the due diligence, design, permitting, and construction phases of a project. I manage multi-disciplinary teams, interact with local and state agencies, and lead environmental assessments, remedial actions, and permitting and engineering design for infrastructure at large commercial and industrial sites. I am part of our business development team that focuses on the energy, environmental and infrastructure markets. Our clients include public and private clients in the energy, healthcare, retail, office, recreational, ecological restoration, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial markets. I also manage our Dublin, Ohio engineering group and provide technical engineering support for Hull's other offices.

1 **Q.3. What is your educational and professional background?**

2 **A.3.** I have a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the Ohio State University
3 and have been practicing engineering as an engineering consultant for 32 years. I have
4 been a registered Professional Engineer in Ohio for 27 years and I am also a registered
5 Professional Engineer in 15 other states. I have been performing civil engineering
6 services on renewable energy projects for over ten years.

7 **Q.4. On whose behalf are you offering testimony?**

8 **A.4.** I am testifying on behalf of the Applicant, Big Plain Solar, LLC (“Applicant”) in
9 support of its application filed in Case No. 19-1823-EL-BGN.

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

11 **A.5.** The purpose of my testimony is to describe transportation studies my firm
12 undertook on behalf of the Applicant, to summarize the results of those studies and
13 provide my assessment of traffic impacts of the Madison Solar Farm (“Project”). I will
14 also provide an overview of how the Project will be decommissioned. Finally, I will
15 address Conditions 17 and 26 of the Joint Stipulation filed on January 22, 2020, which I
16 have reviewed.

17 **Q.6. Please describe the studies that you and your firm undertook on behalf of the**
18 **Applicant.**

19 **A.6.** Hull undertook a Route Evaluation Study of the Project to evaluate the anticipated
20 impact of the construction of the Project on roads and bridges and any needed
21 improvements prior to construction or likely repairs needed following construction. The
22 Route Evaluation Study also evaluated the need for any transportation-related permits and

1 potential impact on local traffic. A copy of that study is included in the Application as
2 Exhibit E.

3 **Q.7. What were the conclusions of the Route Evaluation Study?**

4 **A.7.** It concluded that sufficient infrastructure exists via Interstate, State, and local roads
5 to construct the facility. While a final delivery route has not been finalized, it is likely that
6 delivery of Project components to the Project Area will be from the south by way of
7 Interstate 71 and State Route 56. State Route 56 runs near the southern side of the Project
8 Area south of London, Ohio. An alternate route would be from the north by way of
9 Interstate 70 and State Route 56. The majority of the Project Area will be accessed via Big
10 Plain Circleville Road (County Road 4). Within the Project Area, county and township
11 roads and new private gravel access roads will likely be used to deliver equipment and
12 materials. Portions of Glade Run Road (CR 70) and Hume Lever Road (Township Road
13 73) south of Big Plain Circleville Road are the recommended routes. Through my work
14 on the Route Evaluation Study and in my opinion, all of the roads reviewed can be utilized
15 for equipment delivery and construction traffic.

16 The Route Evaluation Study also concluded that the vast majority of the vehicles will be
17 of legal weight and dimensions. Some limited components such as switchgear or
18 transformers for switchyards and substations may require the use of oversize/overweight
19 vehicles. In such an event, the Applicant will obtain special hauling permits for these
20 oversize/overweight vehicles from the Ohio Department of Transportation or from the
21 applicable local authority.

22 Finally, the Route Evaluation Study concluded that the travelling public is likely to
23 experience, at most, minor delays and inconveniences during the construction of the

1 Project. Because this is an agricultural area, heavier use of roadways by local farmers
2 during planting and harvest seasons will occur. Prior to construction, a transportation
3 management plan will be prepared that describes the procedures that will be used to
4 manage traffic during construction, and it will be shared with local law enforcement,
5 schools and local landowners.

6 **Q.8. What is your overall assessment of the potential traffic impacts of the Madison Solar**
7 **Farm?**

8 **A.8.** Based on the results of the Route Evaluation Study and my experience, I would not
9 expect the construction or operation of the Project to have a negative effect on the travelling
10 public. I would also believe, based on my experience, that the construction or operation of
11 the Project will not have a negative effect on the condition of the local roadways.

12 **Q.9. Do you support Condition 26 in the Joint Stipulation?**

13 **A.9.** Yes, this condition is in the public interest. This condition will ensure that the
14 Applicant obtain all necessary transportation permits prior to commencing construction.
15 The Applicant will also coordinate with related agencies, such as the county engineer, the
16 Ohio Department of Transportation, local law enforcement, and health and safety officials,
17 regarding the construction and operation of the Project. Finally, the Applicant will also
18 develop a transportation management plan and submit it to Staff prior to the
19 preconstruction conference. This condition will ensure minimal delays with regard to local
20 traffic related to the construction and operation of the Project

21 **Q.10. How will the Project be decommissioned?**

1 **A.10.** The Applicant included Exhibit O (Closure, Decommissioning, and Reclamation
2 Plan) as part of its Application. Exhibit O includes details on decommissioning activities
3 and site restoration.

4 The Project is expected to operate for at least 40 years. Because decommissioning will
5 occur well in the future, the Applicant expects to finalize the currently filed
6 decommissioning plan in the months prior to the scheduled decommissioning to ensure
7 the final plan addresses the proposed future land use of the site.

8 Pre-decommissioning activities will be conducted to prepare the Project for demolition,
9 including assessing the existing site conditions and removing any hazardous materials
10 from the site. Decommissioning activities will involve the removal of system
11 components such as collection substation, perimeter fence, solar field, transformers, and
12 inverters. These structures will be dismantled and moved to designated areas for either
13 recycling or disposal at an approved landfill. Above-ground structures will be removed
14 through mechanical or other approved methods. Below-ground structures will be
15 removed to a minimum depth of 36 inches and will include items such as electrical lines
16 and conduits, and concrete slabs. Any stormwater retention basins will be filled and
17 brought to grade level.

18 Site decommissioning and equipment removal may take a year or more. After removal of
19 existing Project structures, the site will be chiseled and disked to loosen compacted soils.
20 Then, the site will be revegetated using a seed mix appropriate for the region. Once
21 decommissioning is complete, the Project Area can be returned to other uses, including
22 agricultural production.

23 **Q.11. Do you believe the decommissioning plan is acceptable?**

1 **A.11.** Yes. In my experience, the plan, as outlined in Exhibit O and its subsequent
2 update 30 days prior to the preconstruction conference, as explained below, will ensure
3 appropriate decommissioning of the Project so that the Project Area can be returned to
4 another use after the end of the Project's useful life. Given the relatively low impact of a
5 solar farm compared to the impact of other forms of electricity generation,
6 decommissioning of the Project should not be a significant impediment to future uses of
7 the Project Area, including a potential return to agricultural use.

8 **Q.12. Do you support Condition 17 in the Joint Stipulation?**

9 **A.12.** Yes. Condition 17 ensures that the Applicant will provide, among other things,
10 the total cost to decommission the Project to the Ohio Power Siting Board 30 days prior
11 to the preconstruction conference. Additionally, the condition provides the Applicant a
12 timeframe to periodically update decommissioning cost estimates. Finally, the condition
13 directs the Applicant to post financial assurance, where the company is the principal, the
14 insurance company is the surety, and the Ohio Power Siting Board is the obligee, when
15 the decommissioning cost net of salvage value is positive. Overall, this condition ensures
16 that decommissioning costs are appropriately calculated and there is adequate financial
17 security in place to decommission the project.

18 **Q.13. Does this conclude your direct testimony?**

19 **A.13.** Yes, it does.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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Summary: Testimony Direct Testimony of Mark Bonifas electronically filed by Ms. Anna Sanyal on behalf of Big Plain Solar, LLC