

BEFORE THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

In the Matter of the Application
of Stark Solar, LLC for a
Certificate of Environmental
Compatibility and Public Need to
Construct a Solar-Powered
Electric Generation Facility in
Stark County, Ohio
(Stark Solar, LLC)

Case No.
23-0931-EL-BGN

HEARING

DATE: Monday, August 5, 2024
TIME: 5:02 p.m.
BEFORE: Honorable Judge Matthew Sandor
Honorable Judge Manette Asta
LOCATION: Marlinton High School
10450 Moulin Avenue
Alliance, OH 44601
REPORTED BY: Michael Rennillo
JOB NO.: 6734179

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1	A P P E A R A N C E S	
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18	ALSO PRESENT:	
19	Janet Weir Creighton, Stark County Commission's	
20	Ad Hoc Representative	
21	Jenny Jones, Board of Trustees of Washington	
22	Township's Ad Hoc Representative	
23		
24		
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 THE REPORTER: We are on the record at
3 5:02 p.m.
4 JUDGE SANDOR: Good evening, everyone.
5 The Ohio Power Siting Board calls today case number
6 23-0931-EL-BGN which is captioned in the matter of The
7 Application of Stark Solar, LLC for a Certificate of
8 Environmental Compatibility and Public Need to
9 Construct a Solar-Powered Electric Generation Facility
10 in Stark County, Ohio. My name is Matt Sandor and
11 with me is Manette Asta. Together, we are the board's
12 administrative law judges assigned to hear this case
13 today.
14 The passage of Senate Bill 52 provides
15 new opportunities for county commissioners and
16 township trustees to participate in deciding on solar
17 projects in the community. County commissioners may
18 choose one commissioner or a designee to serve as an
19 ad hoc board member for the purpose of considering
20 this case. In addition, township trustees may choose
21 one trustee or a designee to serve as their ad hoc
22 member or board representative. The Stark County
23 commissioners appointed Commissioner Janet Weir
24 Creighton and the Board of Trustees of Washington
25 Township appointed Township fiscal officer Jenny Jones

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1 as the ad hoc board members for this project. I
2 believe both of them are with us this evening.
3 So if you don't mind standing so
4 everyone can see where you are. Thank you.
5 There are also staff members from the
6 board helping out.
7 Staff who's present in the room, if you
8 please raise your hand. Thank you.
9 You likely passed them on your way in.
10 They're the individuals wearing a PUCO or OPSD [ph]
11 badge or shirt. They're available if you have
12 questions concerning the board's process. If you need
13 assistance in accessing any of the documents submitted
14 in this case or if you just have general questions
15 about the hearing tonight. Also, please inform staff
16 if you would like to be added to the list of witnesses
17 for tonight's hearing. Additionally, staff will have
18 forms you may sign that indicate your opposition or
19 support for the project. These will also be
20 considered by the board if you do not wish to testify
21 tonight. Lastly, if there are any members of the
22 media, please talk to staff to get added to the case
23 contact list or if you have any other questions?
24 At this time, I'd like to take
25 appearances of the parties starting with Stark Solar.

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1 MR. MCDONNELL: Thank you, Your Honor.
2 On behalf of the applicant, Stark Solar, LLC, the law
3 firm of Dickinson Wright at 180 East Broad
4 Street, Suite 3400, Columbus, Ohio 43215 by Matthew
5 McDonnell, Christine Pirik, and Terrence O'Donnell.
6 Thank you, Your Honor.
7 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.
8 From the Ohio Chamber of Commerce?
9 Seeing none, the Stark County Board of Commissioners?
10 Washington Township Board of Trustees? The
11 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local
12 Union 540?
13 MR. DOVE: Thank you, Your Honor. On
14 behalf of IBEW Local 540, the law firm of Kegler,
15 Brown, Hill & Ritter, 65 East State Street, Suite
16 1800, Columbus, Ohio 43215. My name is Robert Dove.
17 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.
18 And then counsel for Solar Free Stark,
19 LLC and the members who also chose to intervene?
20 Okay. Not seeing him here.
21 The subject of today's hearing is an
22 application filed by Stark Solar for the purpose of
23 constructing a 150 megawatt solar powered electric
24 generation facility located in Washington Township in
25 Stark County. The application was filed on February

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1 28, 2024. The board's staff filed a report of
2 investigation on July 22, 2024. This report is a
3 recommendation from the board staff and does not
4 necessarily reflect what the board's final
5 determination in this case will be. The purpose of
6 this evening's public hearing is to receive testimony
7 regarding the application from persons in the local
8 community who are affected by the proposed project.
9 Tonight's public hearing will not be a question and
10 answer session, but rather an opportunity for you to
11 let the board know what you think about the project.
12 This hearing is only one aspect of the
13 process in this case. An evidentiary hearing is
14 currently scheduled to commence on September 17, 2024,
15 at the board's offices in Columbus. The purpose of
16 the evidentiary hearing is for the parties and board
17 staff to provide testimony and other evidence
18 regarding the project. For those of here tonight who
19 are parties to the case, the evidentiary hearing will
20 be your opportunity to be heard. However, with that
21 being said, if you are party to the case, meaning you
22 were granted intervenor status and would like to
23 testify tonight, you may do so. If you're a party to
24 the case, we ask that you keep your comments very
25 brief and that you provide your comments after

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1 everyone else who is not a party has already had the
 2 opportunity to testify first.
 3 Additionally, if you are party to the
 4 case and are represented by an attorney, you may wish
 5 to consult with your attorney before making any
 6 statements here tonight. That especially goes to the
 7 members of Solar Free Stark. I believe your
 8 attorney's not present tonight, so if you end up
 9 signing up to testify and you have been admitted as an
 10 intervenor, please consider doing so or please
 11 consider consulting your attorney before doing so.
 12 Either way though, you will be permitted to testify
 13 and we'll repeat this again as necessary if someone
 14 who's an intervenor does choose to testify tonight.
 15 Tonight's hearing is being transcribed
 16 by a court reporter. If you plan to testify, please
 17 speak clearly and slowly so that the interpreter and
 18 court reporter can accurately reflect your comments on
 19 the record. Also, if you have prepared a written
 20 statement, it would be helpful if you provide a copy
 21 to the court reporter for reference to ensure the
 22 transcript is accurate.
 23 After I finish with the introduction,
 24 we will begin by inviting individuals on the sign-in
 25 sheet to speak about the proposed project. Each

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1 person who signed up to testify will be permitted to
 2 speak once. Before you present your testimony, we
 3 will ask you to take an oath that what you're about to
 4 say is the truth. We will also ask you to state your
 5 name and address for the record and to indicate if you
 6 live or work within the project area. You will then
 7 provide your thoughts on the proposed project.
 8 Counsel for the parties to the case,
 9 Judge Asta, and myself will be permitted to ask you
 10 questions about your statement. We will ask counsel
 11 for the parties as a group whether there are any
 12 cross-examination questions for the witness. Any
 13 counsel that wishes to pursue cross-examination must
 14 respond such as just waving us down or trying to get
 15 our attention some other way or we'll be presumed
 16 counsel has no cross-examination and we'll proceed
 17 with the hearing. The testimony that you provide
 18 tonight will be considered part of the official record
 19 in this case and it will be reviewed by the board
 20 before a final decision is made on the application.
 21 A couple of other notes. If you decide
 22 that you do not want to testify when we read your name
 23 from the sign-up sheet, sign-in sheet, you can pass to
 24 the next witness. If you decide that you prefer to
 25 file written comments in the case docket, the board

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1 staff can answer your questions about how to do that.
 2 Also, once you finish testifying or if you are just
 3 here to observe, you may leave the hearing at any time
 4 you wish. If your name is called and you're a party
 5 to the case, please state that when your name is
 6 called and you'll have the opportunity to testify at
 7 the end of the hearing tonight as I previously
 8 mentioned.
 9 The board appreciates your
 10 participation in tonight's hearing and we want
 11 everyone who has signed up to testify to have the
 12 opportunity to do so. For that reason, please keep
 13 your statement to a reasonable length of no more than
 14 three minutes. We will be holding up a sign when you
 15 have 30 seconds left to provide comments and we'll
 16 also let you know when your three minutes are up.
 17 Again, we set these time limits so that everyone who
 18 would like to testify has the opportunity to speak
 19 tonight. If you have additional comments that you
 20 would like to make but run out of time, you may file
 21 written comments in this case.
 22 At this time, we'll begin with the
 23 testimony. At the front of this, we'll apologize for
 24 any mispronunciations. We'll try our level best to
 25 get it right. And in order for the board to get

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1 through as many comments as possible, please refrain
 2 from speaking out of turn, cheering, or applauding.
 3 With that, we'll start with witnesses.
 4 JUDGE ASTA: Our first witness is Kathy
 5 Wallace.
 6 Please raise your right hand.
 7 WHEREUPON,
 8 KATHY WALLACE,
 9 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 10 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 11 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 12 JUDGE ASTA: Please state and spell
 13 your name for the record.
 14 THE WITNESS: My name is Kathy Wallace,
 15 K-A-T-H-Y W-A-L-L-A-C-E.
 16 JUDGE ASTA: And please provide your
 17 address including township.
 18 THE WITNESS: 4471 Anderson Avenue,
 19 Homeworth, Ohio, Washington Township, Stark County.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 21 within the project area?
 22 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: And are you an intervenor
 24 in this case?
 25 THE WITNESS: No.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. You can proceed.
 2 DIRECT STATEMENT
 3 THE WITNESS: The Stark Solar, LLC,
 4 Samsung C&T Solar Industrial Complex Project is
 5 proposed to take approximately two years to complete.
 6 It is very disturbing to think that for the next forty
 7 years, this project will be taking away jobs from our
 8 farmers and companies that provide seeds for the
 9 farmers, fertilizers for the farmers, supplies and
 10 equipment, let alone all the jobs that the farmers
 11 provide for help working on these farms. These jobs'
 12 losses will be affecting more than just our farmers
 13 and more than just our community will be losing jobs.
 14 Many of my neighbors and I have been
 15 canvassing the Washington Township, Stark County area
 16 for getting signatures of opposition to the Solar
 17 Stark, LLC, Samsung C&T Solar Industrial Complex. We
 18 started to collect signatures in early January of this
 19 year. The signatures were mostly from going
 20 door-to-door and in some very inclement weather. The
 21 most startling discovery was how many people had not
 22 even heard of the solar project. Many of them were
 23 even properties adjacent to the prospective solar
 24 complex. To date, 1,127 petitions have been signed by
 25 residents of Stark County that are 18 years or older.

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1 I'm submitting for the record a copy of the petition
 2 forms.
 3 In addition to the overwhelming
 4 positions of opposition from the local community, a
 5 group of neighbors organized and formed an LLC to
 6 preserve our community culture. The group is named
 7 Solar Free Stark, LLC, has 103 members, 55 which are
 8 the occupants of adjacent parcels to the proposed
 9 solar industrial complex. In addition, it should be
 10 noted that funding for this organization is strictly
 11 from the community. More than 89 percent of funding
 12 has come in donations of \$50 or less. This is
 13 certainly an indication of the commitment of the vast
 14 majority of our community. Thank you.
 15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 Any questions from counsel?
 17 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 18 Your Honor.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: Judge Sandor, do you have
 20 any questions?
 21 Thank you.
 22 Our next witness is Laura Schmucker.
 23 Please raise your right hand.
 24 //
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 LAURA SCHMUCKER,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: Can you state and spell
 7 your name for the record, please?
 8 THE WITNESS: Laura Schmucker,
 9 L-A-U-R-A S-C-H-M-U-C-K-E-R.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address including
 11 township?
 12 THE WITNESS: 12316 Louisville Street
 13 that's Louisville, Ohio, Washington Township.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you work or reside
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: I do.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: And are you an intervenor
 18 in this case?
 19 THE WITNESS: I am not.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 21 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 22 DIRECT STATEMENT
 23 THE WITNESS: Over the last several
 24 months, I've spent a lot of time reading many of the
 25 proposals for solar generation facilities submitting

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1 to the Ohio Power Siting Board. It didn't take long
 2 and I realized that the Stark Solar project was vastly
 3 different. The Ohio Revised Code states that the
 4 facility should represent the minimum adverse
 5 environmental impact and in comparison to other
 6 projects, this is a stretch. To briefly elaborate,
 7 the project is 860 acres and within that 860 acres,
 8 there's 86.23 acres of wetland. That's 10 percent of
 9 the project area, other projects with barely
 10 2 percent. 7.4 acres of tree clearing although the
 11 community was certainly told there would be none.
 12 Eighteen streams and thirteen oil and gas wells.
 13 Holistically looking at this project,
 14 it can easily be identified that a poor choice in
 15 location has a larger negative environmental impact
 16 for such a smaller gain. I am sure that as I stand
 17 here today, I don't need to explain why those wetland
 18 streams and aquifers right through the project are key
 19 players in the water quality for our community and our
 20 livestock. And that negative impacts from the project
 21 have the potential to affect the two water wells
 22 within the project area and the more than 208 water
 23 wells within a mile of that project area.
 24 I never imagined I'd be standing up
 25 here explaining why placing 237,300 panels on racking

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1 systems 9 to 12 feet deep into the earth would impact
 2 the field tile and water drainage on adjacent parcels.
 3 I received no answer regarding how it will be known
 4 during construction that a lateral drain tile was
 5 damaged, but I know that we won't know until the next
 6 time it rains. And how will that be repaired when
 7 there's over 200,000 panels already installed? And
 8 when those damages occur, it will be my husband and I
 9 that get to deal with our flooded pastures full of
 10 Angus cattle. And I assure you the cows and our
 11 daughter's pony, Thunder, they don't swim well. And
 12 then it will be us left to deal with the repercussions
 13 from the crops' suffering.
 14 It will be us that get to deal with the
 15 hundreds of potential hours of glare proposed by the
 16 applicant to our elevated home and roadway. And I am
 17 aware that there is equipment proposed that would
 18 eliminate thousands of hours of road glare, but no
 19 final commitment has been made to use this equipment.
 20 Although the application states that our rural roads
 21 have few bus stops, thousands of hours of glare is a
 22 normal phenomenon, and road delays are not
 23 anticipated, I feel quite differently. The busy state
 24 route that we live on at the bottom of the hill with
 25 potential 700 hours of artificial road glare is not a

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1 normal phenomenon that I want my 5-year-old daughter
 2 experiencing as she gets on the bus for kindergarten
 3 just 500 feet away.
 4 I have no idea how the applicant or any
 5 of their representatives feel about this because my
 6 house has never been contacted. We submitted public
 7 comments to the staff and responses from the staff to
 8 our historic home was identified in the application.
 9 Our driveway is less than 500 feet from the project's
 10 main entrance and they have thousands of hours of
 11 glare predicted to my home, yet not one single contact
 12 has been made. So as I stand here today, I assure you
 13 that although I've been accused of just damaging my
 14 view, my concerns are far greater than my pretty view
 15 has been ruined. Thank you.
 16 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 17 Any questions? No questions?
 18 Thank you.
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: Our next witness --
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Please refrain from
 22 speaking out to, please. Let's let everyone have
 23 their chance to testify. And also, believe me, I
 24 understand, but please, let's refrain from show
 25 support in that way.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Our next witness is
 2 Emily Kimble.
 3 Please raise your right hand.
 4 WHEREUPON,
 5 EMILY KIMBLE,
 6 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 7 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 8 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 9 JUDGE ASTA: And can you state and
 10 spell your name for the record, please?
 11 THE WITNESS: Yes. My name is Emily
 12 Kimble, E-M-I-L-Y K-I-M-B-L-E.
 13 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 14 as township?
 15 THE WITNESS: My address is 13254
 16 Bayton Street, Alliance, Ohio, and my township is
 17 Washington.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside within
 19 the project area?
 20 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do.
 21 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 22 this case?
 23 THE WITNESS: No.
 24 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 25 //

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1 DIRECT STATEMENT
 2 THE WITNESS: In June of 2024, the U.S.
 3 Department of Energy funded several projects by
 4 investing nearly \$10 million in community-focused
 5 research specifically geared toward the siting of
 6 large-scale solar facilities. The purpose of this
 7 grant is to provide funding for social science
 8 research that generates actionable insight to improve
 9 large-scale solar siting processes and outcomes for
 10 host communities as well as the solar industry and
 11 other stakeholders.
 12 The process of approving large-scale
 13 solar projects is a complex process that requires
 14 input by several different entities. Many of the
 15 awarded projects are researching the community,
 16 planning for large-scale solar development, and best
 17 practices for engaging with communities during the
 18 siting process. The importance of this grant
 19 demonstrates an expanding emphasis on social sciences
 20 regarding large-scale solar project. The research
 21 that these awardees will be conducting is imperative
 22 to understanding the stigma and opposition surrounding
 23 proposed large-scale solar projects like this one from
 24 Stark Solar. I feel that when these studies publish
 25 their results, it will show the difference between

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1 those residentially directly affected and those farther
 2 away.
 3 The potential impact of the Stark Solar
 4 project on our community, especially the 106
 5 residential structures within a 1,500-foot radius of
 6 the modules are deeply troubling. Additionally, the
 7 construction and operation of the project would
 8 significantly affect approximately 555 acres of land.
 9 I urge the board to carefully consider the adverse
 10 effects on our community's quality of life, property
 11 values, and the safety concerns for our township.
 12 The majority of our residents living
 13 within the 5-mile project radius and those even closer
 14 within the 2-mile radius have voiced their opposition
 15 to the project. The letters submitted and the
 16 location of the senders make it evident where the
 17 support and opposition for the project lie. I am
 18 deeply concerned about the potential negative impacts
 19 of this development on our community. It is crucial
 20 to thoroughly evaluate the potential disruption to
 21 habitats, impact to local wildlife, and alteration of
 22 our community's natural resources. Additionally, the
 23 unforeseen effects on infrastructure such as roads,
 24 water supply, and emergency services must be carefully
 25 considered before proceeding with the project. Thank

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1 you for your time and consideration when evaluating
 2 this project.
 3 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 4 Any questions?
 5 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 6 Your Honor. Thank you.
 7 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 8 Our next witness is Sue Yarian.
 9 Please raise your right hand.
 10 WHEREUPON,
 11 SUE YARIAN,
 12 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 13 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 14 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 15 JUDGE ASTA: please state and spell
 16 your name for the record.
 17 THE WITNESS: Sue Yarian, S-U-E
 18 Y-A-R-I-A-N.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 20 as township?
 21 THE WITNESS: 12285 Hickorycrest Street
 22 Northeast, Alliance, township is Washington, Stark
 23 County.
 24 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 25 within the project area?

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1 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.
 2 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 3 this case?
 4 THE WITNESS: No, ma'am.
 5 JUDGE ASTA: You can proceed.
 6 THE WITNESS: All right.
 7 DIRECT STATEMENT
 8 THE WITNESS: I am here today to
 9 express my concerns from the residents of our small
 10 township regarding the proposed large-scale solar
 11 facility that is planned to be established in our
 12 community. While we fully support and embrace the use
 13 of solar energy for sustainable development, the
 14 potential establishment of a large-scale solar
 15 facility within our township has raised significant
 16 apprehensions among the residents.
 17 The primary concern voiced by the
 18 community pertain to safety and communication. There
 19 is a sense of unease regarding the safety implications
 20 of introducing a large-scale industrial facility in
 21 close proximity to residential areas. Furthermore,
 22 the lack of comprehensive communication and engagement
 23 from the project stakeholders has left the community
 24 feeling uninformed and apprehensive about the
 25 potential impacts of this development.

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1 It is crucial for the board to
 2 thoroughly evaluate and address these concerns before
 3 making any decisions related to this project. I
 4 respectfully request that the board take into account
 5 the broader implications of this development and
 6 ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to
 7 state their opinions and concerns. Thank you for
 8 attention to this matter.
 9 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 10 Any questions?
 11 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 12 Your Honor. Thank you.
 13 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 14 Our next witness is Shane Fritz.
 15 Please raise your right hand.
 16 WHEREUPON,
 17 SHAYNA FRITZ
 18 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 19 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 20 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 21 JUDGE ASTA: Please state and spell
 22 your name for the record.
 23 THE WITNESS: Shayna Fritz,
 24 S-H-A-Y-N-A, last name F-R-I-T-Z.
 25 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well

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1 as township?

2 THE WITNESS: 311 West 4th Avenue

3 Columbus, Ohio.

4 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to

5 this case?

6 THE WITNESS: No.

7 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.

8 DIRECT STATEMENT

9 THE WITNESS: Good evening. My name is

10 Shayna Fritz, and I'm the executive director of the

11 Ohio Conservative Energy Forum. I am here today to

12 voice our support for a Stark Solar project that is

13 being developed by Samsung and Stark County. At the

14 Ohio Conservative Energy Forum, we advocate for energy

15 solutions that are both innovative and market-driven,

16 aligning with our conservative values of energy

17 independence, environmental stewardship, and respect

18 for property rights. The Stark Solar project embodies

19 these principles.

20 First and foremost, this project

21 promises significant economic benefits for this

22 community. It will create numerous construction jobs,

23 generate additional and consistent tax revenues, and

24 provide ongoing lease payments to local landowners.

25 In today's challenging economic climate, these

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1 opportunities are invaluable for the prosperity and

2 stability of Stark County. Furthermore, the Stark

3 Solar project will enhance not only our state's energy

4 infrastructure, but our country's by adding 150

5 megawatts to our grid. By harnessing solar power, we

6 can reduce our reliance on out-of-state energy sources

7 and increase our nation's energy independence.

8 In conclusion, the Stark Solar project

9 represents a unique opportunity for Stark County and

10 Ohio as a whole. It offers economic growth,

11 environmental benefits, and a forward-thinking

12 approach to energy that upholds our conservative

13 values. I urge the Ohio Power Siting Board to provide

14 this project an approval and help pave the way for a

15 brighter, more sustainable future for our state.

16 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

17 Any questions?

18 MR. MCDONNELL: No.

19 JUDGE ASTA: No? Okay. Thank you,

20 Ms. --

21 Our next witness is Carla Scott.

22 Please raise your right hand.

23 //

24 //

25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,

2 CARLA SCOTT,

3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn

4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell

7 your name for the record.

8 THE WITNESS: Carla Scott, C-A-R-L-A,

9 Scott, S-C-O-T-T.

10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well

11 as township?

12 THE WITNESS: 4706 Hartzell Avenue

13 Northeast, Paris, Ohio 44669 and I'm in Washington

14 Township.

15 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work

16 within the project area?

17 THE WITNESS: Yes.

18 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to

19 this case?

20 THE WITNESS: No.

21 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.

22 DIRECT STATEMENT

23 THE WITNESS: As a neighbor to the

24 proposed large-scale solar complex in Washington

25 Township, I stand before you today to voice my

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1 concerns and objections regarding this project. While

2 the intentions behind small-scale solar energy are

3 commendable, the impact on our local community cannot

4 be overlooked with the proposed project. Firstly, the

5 sheer scale of this proposed solar complex threatens

6 to significantly alter the character of our

7 neighborhood. The construction of a massive array of

8 solar panels will dominate the landscape, replacing

9 our open fields with industrial-grade installations.

10 The shift not only affects the visual appeal of our

11 area, but also a decreased effect on the rural charm

12 and tranquility that many of us value.

13 Also, the construction and maintenance

14 of the utility-scale operation will likely lead to

15 increased noise, dust, and traffic in our otherwise

16 peaceful area. The constant movement of heavy

17 machinery and construction vehicles will disrupt our

18 daily lives and pose safety hazards. This disruption

19 can affect our quality of life and potentially lower

20 property values in the neighborhood.

21 Environmental concerns are also at the

22 forefront of my objections. While solar panels are

23 generally considered environmentally friendly, the

24 clearing of land for their installation can result in

25 loss of plants and animals. This disruption can harm

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1 wildlife and reduce the natural biodiversity that our
 2 community currently enjoys. Additionally, the impact
 3 on local groundwater and soil health should be
 4 carefully evaluated as the installation process and
 5 panel management might have unforeseen environmental
 6 consequences.

7 Economic factors are another
 8 significant concern. The presence of a large-scale
 9 solar complex can impact local businesses and property
 10 values. For residents and small business owners
 11 relying on the rural character of our area to attract
 12 customers or maintain property value, this change
 13 could have detrimental effects.

14 In conclusion, as stated earlier, I
 15 oppose the large-scale industrial solar project that's
 16 being considered in Washington Township. The
 17 dismantling of our community's landscape, the
 18 disruption of the environmental ecosystem, and the
 19 negative economic effects are just a few of the major
 20 concerns I hope the Ohio Power Siting Board takes
 21 under consideration. Thank you.

22 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 23 Any questions?
 24 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions.
 25 JUDGE ASTA: We have no questions.

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1 Thank you.
 2 Next witness is Travis Mariast.
 3 Mariast. Hello.
 4 Please raise your right hand.
 5 WHEREUPON,
 6 TRAVIS MARIAST,
 7 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 8 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 9 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 11 your name for the record.
 12 THE WITNESS: My name is Travis
 13 Mariast. That's T-R-A-V-I-S M-A-R-I-A-S-T.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 15 as township?
 16 THE WITNESS: It is 825 Bank Street,
 17 Ashland, Ohio.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: Are you a party to this
 19 case?
 20 THE WITNESS: No.
 21 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 22 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 23 DIRECT STATEMENT
 24 THE WITNESS: My name is Travis
 25 Mariast. I am a business representative for the

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1 Central Midwest Regional Council of Carpenters. I
 2 represent over 658 Members in Stark County alone with
 3 over 3,400 in adjoining counties. The CMRCC is in
 4 favor of Stark Solar. We are partnered with over 30
 5 vocational schools within our region, with 22 of them
 6 in the immediate area. We spend countless hours at
 7 school visits and job fairs, providing good paying
 8 careers with benefits. By approving Stark Solar, it
 9 can give young, local men and women an opportunity to
 10 start a career with good wages, health benefits, a
 11 pension, and a free education with the carpenter's
 12 union. It will also provide work to some of our
 13 current members locally that normally might have to be
 14 travelling outside Stark County.

15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 No questions? Thank you.
 17 And our next witness is Ryan Santa
 18 Maria.
 19 Please raise your right hand.
 20 WHEREUPON,
 21 RYAN SANTA MARIA,
 22 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 23 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 24 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 25 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell

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1 your name for the record.
 2 THE WITNESS: It's Ryan Santa Maria
 3 R-Y-A-N S-A-N-T-A M-A-R-I-A.
 4 THE REPORTER: Is that two words or one
 5 word?
 6 THE WITNESS: Two words.
 7 THE REPORTER: Thank you.
 8 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 9 as township?
 10 THE WITNESS: 820 East Broad Street
 11 Columbus, Ohio.
 12 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 13 this case?
 14 THE WITNESS: I'm not.
 15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 DIRECT STATEMENT
 17 THE WITNESS: Good evening. My name is
 18 Ryan Santa Maria and I'm here tonight on behalf of the
 19 Ohio Land & Liberty Coalition. We are a conservative
 20 nonprofit organization that advocates for property
 21 rights and supports renewable energy in Ohio. Today
 22 I'm here to urge you and everyone in attendance to
 23 consider the implications of limiting private property
 24 rights in Ohio.
 25 We have all enjoyed living in this

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1 great country our entire lives knowing we had
 2 constitutionally protected rights that could not be
 3 impeded by our government. Unfortunately, times are
 4 changing and there are calls to strip us of our rights
 5 daily, like our right to bear arms or our right to
 6 free speech. All of our rights must be defended while
 7 we still have them. I see no difference in the folks
 8 in D.C. asking for our gun rights to be restricted and
 9 asking for a landowner to have their property rights
 10 restricted. It's a one-way street and you either
 11 support our constitutional rights as Americans or you
 12 don't.

13 Across the state, I have seen farmers
 14 desperate to make a living. Times are tough and we
 15 are all struggling to survive whether it's to pay the
 16 grocery bills or keep the house. But these land
 17 owners saw an opportunity to live out their American
 18 dream by utilizing their property. Turning away
 19 projects doesn't only hurt those land owners, it hurts
 20 the men and women who would build them, hard working
 21 Ohioans that just want to provide for their families.

22 Now, I do get it. Some people are
 23 opposed to these projects and that's their right to
 24 have that opinion, but we cannot let opinions and
 25 dislikes be used as the foundation for restricting

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1 rights here in America. What this comes down to is a
 2 landowner making a decision for themselves and their
 3 families. There is one farmer's statements that have
 4 stuck with me. He told me that it was not his
 5 responsibility to maintain his neighbors' view of his
 6 land. But that is the argument I hear across the
 7 state. People want to force a private landowner to
 8 use their land in a way that keeps them happy. Their
 9 land is not our land.

10 I asked the Ohio Power Siting Board to
 11 consider all of our private property rights when
 12 making a decision on this project. Protect our
 13 property rights and protect our constitution. Thank
 14 you.

15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 Any questions?
 17 Thank you, Mr. Santa Maria.
 18 Our next witness is Greg Bambenek.
 19 THE REPORTER: Pardon me.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: Hi.
 21 MR. BAMBENEK: Hi.
 22 JUDGE ASTA: Please raise your right
 23 hand.
 24 //
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 GREG BAMBENEK,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: My name is Greg Bambenek,
 9 G-R-E-G B-A-M-B-E-N-E-K.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 11 as township?
 12 THE WITNESS: 535 South Canal Street,
 13 Canal Fulton, Ohio, Lawrence Township.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: I do.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 18 this case?
 19 THE WITNESS: No.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 21 THE WITNESS: All right.
 22 DIRECT STATEMENT
 23 THE WITNESS: My name is Greg Bambenek
 24 and I'm a proud resident of Stark County. And I'm
 25 here today to voice my strong support for the Stark

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1 Solar project in Washington Township. A recent
 2 article in the New York Times highlighted that the
 3 Massillon-Canton area is projected to be the third
 4 fastest growing region in the country for new housing
 5 development. This anticipated growth brings with it a
 6 significant increase in demand for energy. As our
 7 community expands, it's crucial that we have the
 8 infrastructure in place to meet the rising demand
 9 efficiently and sustainably. The Stark Solar project
 10 is an essential step in that direction.

11 Additionally, is important to note that
 12 Ohio is currently a net importer of electricity. We
 13 rely heavily on power generation outside our state to
 14 meet our energy needs. The Stark Solar project offers
 15 a significant opportunity to change this dynamic. By
 16 producing more electricity locally, we can reduce our
 17 dependence on external power sources, increase our
 18 energy independence, and contribute to the overall
 19 stability of Ohio's energy supply, ultimately leading
 20 to a more stable and possibly lower electrical rates
 21 for our residents and businesses alike.

22 Moreover, the Stark Solar projects
 23 stands to attract further investment into Stark
 24 County. When businesses see that we are
 25 forward-thinking and committed to sustainable energy

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1 solutions, they are more likely to invest in our
 2 community. This project serves as a beacon showcasing
 3 our commitment to innovation, environmental
 4 stewardship, and making Stark County an attractive
 5 destination for new business and development.
 6 Importantly, the Stark Colar project
 7 will also provide local jobs for local people. It is
 8 projected to employ at least 200 local electricians,
 9 laborers, and operators. These jobs are more than
 10 just numbers, they represent real opportunities for
 11 our neighbors, friends, and family members. By
 12 employing local workers, we ensure that the economic
 13 benefits of this project stay within our community,
 14 supporting our local economy and fostering a sense of
 15 pride and ownership among our residents.
 16 In conclusion, the Stark Solar project
 17 is a vital investment in the future of our community.
 18 It will help us meet increasing energy demands of a
 19 growing population, potentially lowering energy costs,
 20 reduce our reliance on imported electricity, and
 21 attract new investments and provided valuable jobs for
 22 our local residents. I strongly urge the Ohio Power
 23 Siting Board to approve this project and recognize the
 24 numerous benefits it will bring to Stark County and
 25 the state of Ohio. And for the interest of the

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1 public, it would help provide money to keep these
 2 schools maintained, to have AC.
 3 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Again,
 5 please refrain from booing, cheering,
 6 anything -- please. Thank you.
 7 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you. Okay. Our
 8 next witness is Bill Sherer.
 9 Please raise your right hand.
 10 WHEREUPON,
 11 BILL SCHERER,
 12 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 13 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 14 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 15 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 16 your name for the record.
 17 THE WITNESS: First name's Bill, last
 18 name is Sherer, S-H-E-R-E-R.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 20 as township?
 21 THE WITNESS: 4670 Fraser Avenue
 22 Northwest, Canton, Ohio.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 24 within the project area?
 25 THE WITNESS: No.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 2 this case?
 3 THE WITNESS: No.
 4 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 5 DIRECT STATEMENT
 6 THE WITNESS: I just want to state as a
 7 former business manager for Ironworkers Local 550 and
 8 the new mayor for the city of Canton, I want to state
 9 my support for this project for Stark Solar. This
 10 will not only bolster the economic development, just
 11 not in Canton, but in Stark County as a whole. Tax
 12 revenue for essential services such as our safety
 13 forces, which benefits every community, and driving
 14 new businesses to the region with a projected \$57
 15 million in revenue over the next 40 years to support
 16 local schools, safety services, and other government
 17 services. But also a \$200 million investment into the
 18 local economy along with providing \$35 million with
 19 additional revenue for local schools like I stated
 20 before.
 21 But where I come from, good paying jobs
 22 do solve a lot of problems and even the construction
 23 jobs alone for the building trades, which are building
 24 trades represents 15 unions and over 5,000 members.
 25 And just like that state that I'm in favor of moving

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1 forward with this project.
 2 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 4 JUDGE ASTA: Any questions?
 5 THE WITNESS: Nope. Thank you.
 6 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 7 And with that, I will hand it back to
 8 Judge Sandor for the next round of witnesses.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. So the next
 10 witness up is Carolyn or Carolyn Crites.
 11 Please raise your right hand.
 12 WHEREUPON,
 13 CAROLYN CRITES,
 14 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 15 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 16 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 18 your name to the record.
 19 THE WITNESS: Carolyn Crites, pardon
 20 me, C-A-R-O-L-Y-N C-R-I-T-E-S. And I just wanted to
 21 say I think a solar farm is a --
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: One moment, I just have
 23 to finish swearing you in real quick and then you can
 24 provide your statement. Can you provide your address,
 25 including the township?

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1 THE WITNESS: Oh, yes. Sorry. 964
 2 Overlook Drive, Alliance, Ohio, Stark County. I don't
 3 believe there is a township.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And then you work
 5 or reside within the project area?
 6 THE WITNESS: I don't think so, but I
 7 am Stark County.
 8 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And are you a
 9 party to the case?
 10 THE WITNESS: No.
 11 JUDGE SANDOR: Now, go ahead.
 12 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 13 DIRECT STATEMENT
 14 THE WITNESS: I just wanted to say that
 15 I think a solar farm is a win-win-win. It provides
 16 very much needed money for the local schools and it
 17 also, I wanted to say, well, as you've heard, it
 18 provides jobs, it provides clean energy. We have
 19 supported gas and oil and a lot of people with
 20 property have profited from that, but this energy
 21 generator won't pollute the water table, it won't
 22 pollute the air. It's clean, well-needed energy.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: I'm sorry if you could
 24 pause for a second.
 25 If we could please keep the talking to

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1 a minimum. The court reporter needs to be able to
 2 hear the testimony and we would like to give everyone
 3 their opportunity to speak uninterrupted.
 4 That will not count towards your time.
 5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 6 And I have heard about we need farms,
 7 we need farmland. Well, that is true, but when a
 8 farmer decides to sell his property, he's finished
 9 farming for whatever reason or deceased, often that
 10 land goes to auction. And I've read about auctions,
 11 I've seen them advertise in the Farm and Dairy and
 12 also been to auctions. And what they usually do is
 13 they parcel the land, see how much parcels go for, and
 14 then try to sell it as a whole. And the person
 15 selling that land gets whichever is greater and often
 16 it goes into parcels. So you cannot count on that
 17 land staying a farm.
 18 I think the other thing is that we need
 19 the energy. And I have to say this, I live in
 20 Alliance, the town close by, and I'm often feeling
 21 smug when we have a vote to help the schools.
 22 Alliance almost always votes yes to give the money
 23 that the schools need and the townships almost always
 24 vote no. But I think the reason is in Alliance, we
 25 have businesses and industry to help pay those taxes

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1 and so it makes it less for the homeowners. In the
 2 townships, they don't have the business and industry
 3 to help support these schools, so of course it's
 4 higher a burden on the farms and homeowners. Thank
 5 you very much.
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 7 counsel?
 8 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 9 Your Honor.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you very much.
 11 Our next witness is David Russell Jr.
 12 Please raise your right hand.
 13 WHEREUPON,
 14 DAVID RUSSELL JR.,
 15 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 16 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 17 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 19 your name for the record.
 20 THE WITNESS: David Russell Jr.,
 21 D-A-V-I-D R-U-S-S-E-L-L J-R.
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 23 address including the township.
 24 THE WITNESS: 1721 Triplett Boulevard,
 25 Akron, Ohio 44306.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: And the township if you
 2 have one.
 3 THE WITNESS: There's no township.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: And do you work or
 5 reside within the project area?
 6 THE WITNESS: I do.
 7 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 8 case?
 9 THE WITNESS: No.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Thank you.
 11 Please proceed.
 12 DIRECT STATEMENT
 13 THE WITNESS: Good evening everyone.
 14 I'm here on behalf of the Operating Engineers Local
 15 Union 18 to support the approval of the Stark Solar
 16 project. The operating engineers or the individuals
 17 who operate heavy equipment such as bulldozers,
 18 excavators, backhoes, cranes, forklifts and so on.
 19 The roads and bridges you drive on were most likely
 20 built by members of Local 18 along with our fellow
 21 Union tradesmen and women. We have an agreement
 22 signed with Samsung to perform the work associated
 23 with this project, providing our membership with
 24 numerous employment opportunities, in turn, which will
 25 create high-paying wages, healthcare benefits, and

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1 apprenticeship programs that can continue to grow
2 because of this solar industry. If approved, the
3 Stark Solar project will not only create jobs, but you
4 can expect a huge economic impact, tens of millions of
5 dollars in additional tax money, along with clean
6 energy for Ohio as a result of this project.
7 Local 18 encourages the Ohio Power
8 Siting Board to please support the jobs of the men and
9 women of Local 18, LIUNA, and the IBEW by approving
10 the Stark Solar project. Thank you.
11 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions, Counsel?
12 Okay. Thank you very much.
13 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions. Thank
14 you.
15 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Thank you very
16 much.
17 Our next witness is Beatrice Hoopes.
18 THE REPORTER: Do you have your
19 microphone on? I apologize. Okay. I apologize.
20 JUDGE SANDOR: Can you hear me better
21 now?
22 THE REPORTER: Yeah. Yeah, I think so.
23 JUDGE SANDOR: Perfect. All right.
24 Please raise your right hand.
25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
2 BEATRICE HOOPES,
3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
7 your name for the record.
8 THE WITNESS: My name is Beatrice
9 Hoopes, B-E-A-T-R-I-C-E, Hoopes, H-O-O-P-E-S.
10 JUDGE SANDOR: Can everyone hear okay
11 in the back? Okay.
12 Can you please provide your address
13 including the township?
14 THE WITNESS: The address is 13205
15 Cenfield Street, Alliance, Ohio 44601. Township is
16 Washington Township.
17 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
18 within the project area?
19 THE WITNESS: I reside in the project
20 area.
21 JUDGE SANDOR: And are you a party to
22 the case?
23 THE WITNESS: No.
24 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Please provide
25 your testimony.

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1 DIRECT STATEMENT
2 THE WITNESS: Imagine a better world
3 full of lush, green forest, crystal clear streams, and
4 rolling hills with grass gently waving in the wind.
5 Sounds like paradise; right? These are the things we
6 have. These are the things that will disappear,
7 things that will be destroyed if this project is
8 allowed to go through. My reason for opposing this
9 solar project is due to the close proximity to the
10 residential homes, natural waterways, and wildlife.
11 Over 100 homes will be affected in this area, which
12 are totally surrounding the 860 areas.
13 People have worked hard to provide a
14 safe place for their family. We should not have to
15 fight to protect what we have worked all our lives
16 for, protecting our family, our homes, our health, the
17 natural resources, wildlife, and area probably losing
18 property value. Will we have to test our water yearly
19 to make sure our wells and creeks and waterways are
20 not contaminated? This is a burden we will have since
21 there is no EPA requirements.
22 The people who are for this project
23 because of jobs that we'll be able to get, they will
24 have the opportunity to get in their car and leave the
25 job site at the night. We will have to sit and watch

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1 out our yards, at our front doors, and watch this
2 project destroy the land that we have come to love.
3 There will be no more fertile soil. We will listen to
4 the construction equipment and look at concrete and
5 steel and mirrors for the next 30 years or more. At
6 the end of the 30 years, what will we have? Will the
7 fields be able to be turned back into farmland or will
8 they be contaminated soil?
9 I would like to address the fact that a
10 solar field of this size should not be located in an
11 agricultural, residential area. A solar field of this
12 size should be located in an area of landfills or
13 strip mines, not around family homes of over 100
14 homes. Thank you.
15 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.
16 Any questions?
17 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions.
18 JUDGE SANDOR: No questions.
19 All right. Thank you for your
20 testimony.
21 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
22 JUDGE SANDOR: Our next witness is
23 Diana Chambers.
24 Raise your right hand.
25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 DIANA CHAMBERS,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: Diana Chambers, D-I-A-N-A
 9 C-H-A-M-B-E-R-S.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 11 address including the township.
 12 THE WITNESS: 11592 McCallum Avenue and
 13 it's Lexington Township.
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: I do not.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And are you a
 18 party to the case?
 19 THE WITNESS: I am not.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Thank you.
 21 DIRECT STATEMENT
 22 THE WITNESS: I would like to express
 23 my deep concerns in opposition to the proposed
 24 large-scale solar facility in such a small township.
 25 I strongly believe that this project will not have the

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1 positive impacts that its proponents are claiming. I
 2 am troubled by the assertions that solar facilities
 3 will generate much-needed jobs for our community. My
 4 husband and I have worked in manufacturing and the
 5 trade industries for over a decade, most of which
 6 right here in Stark County.
 7 One of the largest concerns that we see
 8 first-hand is finding workers, especially those with
 9 trade skills, even through apprenticeship programs.
 10 Stark County has an unemployment rate unemployment
 11 rate 2 percent less than the state, ranked 47th as
 12 well, while Washington Township, the area the
 13 project's in, is 4.6 percent, unemployment rate, way
 14 below the state. These figures indicate -- plus my
 15 first-hand experience -- that jobs needs are not in
 16 dire need for additional employment and opportunities
 17 at this time in our communities. Furthermore,
 18 Washington Township has a relatively low poverty rate
 19 of 7.1 percent. It is evident that a economic
 20 situation does not warrant the need for such a
 21 large-scale solar project.
 22 To share a little more about myself, my
 23 husband and I spent years waiting, searching, and
 24 saving to purchase our family farm where we started
 25 our family business and raise our daughter in an

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1 agricultural setting. We were blessed about a year
 2 ago to find this. We started our business, but we
 3 pride ourselves most in restoring our property,
 4 enhancing it for not only its agricultural purpose,
 5 but also the aesthetics for our neighborhood, much
 6 like many of the current agricultural owners in the
 7 Washington Township. The potential impacts of this
 8 project on the community, especially those of the 106
 9 residential structures, are deeply troubling.
 10 Additionally, the construction and operation of the
 11 project would significantly affect approximately 555
 12 acres of land, including almost 77 acres of designated
 13 agricultural district land. I am concerned that these
 14 components of the project would be detrimental to
 15 property values, the agricultural use of the affected
 16 land.
 17 The potential environmental impacts of
 18 the endeavor cannot be overstated, and it is critical
 19 to thoroughly consider the long-term consequences.
 20 Converting rural land into large-scale solar projects
 21 could lead to irreversible harm to our ecosystem and
 22 our wetlands. The construction process involving
 23 clearing trees, grading soil compaction, and severe
 24 disruption to our natural habitat could potentially
 25 hinder agricultural purposes for years to come.

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1 Additionally, these effects on healthy soil,
 2 organisms, and topsoil alongside the spread of
 3 invasive plant species poses great threat to our local
 4 biodiversity and visual aesthetics.
 5 Given the irreversible nature of these
 6 environmental and economic changes, I urge the board
 7 to comprehensively assess the long-term impacts before
 8 moving forward.
 9 JUDGE ASTA: And that's time.
 10 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 11 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 12 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions for the
 13 witness?
 14 MR. CAMPITI: No. No questions,
 15 Your Honor.
 16 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 17 testimony.
 18 Our next witness is James P. Egert or
 19 Egert.
 20 MR. EGERT: Good evening. My name is
 21 James P. Egert --
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: Hold on, please. I just
 23 got to swear you in and get some more information from
 24 you. Please raise your right hand.
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 JAMES P. EGERT,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: James, J-A-M-E-S, middle
 9 initial P., last name, E-G-E-R-T. The address I live
 10 at is 1264 Cobblefield Street Northeast, Canton, Ohio,
 11 Plain Township.
 12 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 13 within the project area?
 14 THE WITNESS: I'm a joint property
 15 owner of 270 acres of productive land, farmland, in
 16 Washington Township.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: And are you a party to
 18 the case?
 19 THE WITNESS: I am not.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Please go ahead
 21 with your testimony.
 22 DIRECT STATEMENT
 23 THE WITNESS: So I'd like to read for
 24 you an article that was published on August the 4th
 25 2024, that's yesterday, in The World News. It's

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1 copyrighted by Dow Jones, Incorporated. The article
 2 is entitled "Solar Farms Crowd Out China's Crops."
 3 "As local officials look to cash in, Beijing worries
 4 food security is under threat. China installed more
 5 solar power capacity last year than the United States
 6 has built its history. Now, Beijing is worried that
 7 the push may have gone too far as solar farms encroach
 8 on cropland, undermining leader Xi Jinping's goal of
 9 ensuring China can feed itself. Solar projects have
 10 become lucrative enough, especially when the state
 11 subsidies are included, that some companies, local
 12 officials, and farmers are repurposing areas once
 13 dedicated to crops, defying Beijing diktats against
 14 developing tillable land.
 15 "State broadcast China Central
 16 Television aired a report on it earlier this year. In
 17 Hubei Providence, a major grain-producing region, it
 18 found several hundred acres once earmarked as
 19 'high-quality farmland' covered with solar panels,
 20 even though the local authorities had once announced
 21 that in 2019 they were going to build irrigation
 22 channels to improve farming. Food security is
 23 paramount for China's leaders, given the country's
 24 limited supply of water tillable land. Past food
 25 shortages include the Great Famine of 1959-'61.

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1 Threatening stability and climate change is raising
 2 fears further of new threats to agricultural. Food
 3 production in recent years hasn't kept up with
 4 increased demand. As early as 2013, Xi Jinping said,
 5 'We must protect farmland like how we protect giant
 6 pandas.' While Beijing still offers subsidies for
 7 solar panels, it has been punishing companies and
 8 officials it believes are exploiting government
 9 support at agriculture's expense.
 10 "Solar operations have been taking over
 11 farmland in other countries as well. A recent study
 12 by Chinese researchers estimated that in 2018, food
 13 production losses from solar development on croplands
 14 globally reached the amount sufficient to feed 4.3
 15 million people for a year." That's larger than the
 16 state of Ohio, by the way. "While Beijing
 17 still -- issues a directive last year stipulating that
 18 solar panel projects shouldn't be billed on farmlands,
 19 grasslands or protected forest lands, promoting at
 20 least ten regional governments to publish new and
 21 updated rules."
 22 So I paraphrased the article. I'll
 23 submit the article for evidence if you want it, but
 24 one of the United State's -- or one of the world's
 25 largest populations, China, is concerned that they've

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1 gone too far in terms of consuming productive farmland
 2 versus solar panel renewable energy. Is this going to
 3 be the United States ten years from now? Will we be
 4 buying imported milk?
 5 JUDGE ASTA: That's time.
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you. Please go
 7 ahead and place the article if you'd like to submit it
 8 right on the dais right there and we'll pick it up
 9 after the hearing.
 10 Any questions from counsel?
 11 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions, thank
 12 you.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Thanks.
 14 Our next witness is John Angerer [ph].
 15 Okay. Thank you. Next is Becky Kesterke.
 16 WHEREUPON,
 17 BECKY KESTERKE,
 18 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 19 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 20 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 22 your name for the record.
 23 THE WITNESS: Becky, B-E-C-K-Y,
 24 Kesterke, K-E-S-T-E-R-K-E.
 25 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your

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1 address including the township.
 2 THE WITNESS: 6122 Frederick Avenue
 3 Alliance, Ohio, Township, Washington.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 5 within the project area?
 6 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do.
 7 JUDGE SANDOR: And work or reside?
 8 THE WITNESS: Oh, reside.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you. Are you a
 10 party to the case?
 11 THE WITNESS: No.
 12 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Please go
 13 ahead with your testimony.
 14 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 15 DIRECT STATEMENT
 16 THE WITNESS: Good evening. I come as
 17 a lifelong resident of Washington Township and I am
 18 grieved at what has happened in our community due to
 19 fear and misinformation being circulated. From what I
 20 understand most, if not all, of the concerns that have
 21 been shared can be disproven, but then you folks know
 22 that better than anyone which concerns are valid and
 23 which ones aren't. So I don't want to take up my time
 24 addressing each of them needlessly with you except one
 25 that I had personal experience with. They talked of

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1 the erosion and disturbance of the land, among other
 2 things. When the pipeline was coming through this
 3 area, we attended meetings that involved fear tactics
 4 with horror stories and pictures of what it was going
 5 to do to the area and the land. We chose to go with
 6 the facts and logic and allowed it to run through our
 7 land. None of the concerns of the opposition came to
 8 be. We were perfectly satisfied with the operations
 9 in every way, including the end results. Different
 10 projects, different scenario, same unfounded scare
 11 tactics.
 12 Besides that, I will mention a couple
 13 of things that I don't see in these mailings that
 14 we've been getting, like \$35 million that our schools
 15 would receive. Why are we not hearing about that, not
 16 to mention money that will be allotted for the
 17 township? It seems to me we should be thanking our
 18 farmers for this opportunity rather than stabbing them
 19 in the back. What about the benefit of local,
 20 long-term, sustainable energy? Not hearing much about
 21 that either.
 22 Okay. There's one item on the flyer,
 23 it is almost correct. It says, "The project has
 24 caused a major split in the community." The problem
 25 with that statement isn't that the project has caused

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1 a major split, it's the reaction that has caused the
 2 split. It's people not listening to truth or sitting
 3 down and talking to those who are trying to prepare
 4 for their future. And it's forgetting that this is
 5 still America, even though it's getting harder and
 6 harder to believe that, but it is still America where
 7 a land owner should be allowed to do what he wants to
 8 do with his own land. So it's okay to take a stand
 9 for or against something, but not in a way that
 10 attacks an individual's right to do what he wants in a
 11 legal and moral way with what's his.
 12 I'll close with I am not a farmer,
 13 never have been, but I have always respected farmers
 14 as being the hardest working people among us. Yes, we
 15 are seeing farmland disappear, but keep in mind, that
 16 isn't because there's less land, it's because there's
 17 less farmers. If a solar farm could provide a way for
 18 the last farming generation of a family to keep their
 19 farm, well, that sure beats another housing
 20 development. Thank you.
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 22 counsel? All right. Thank you.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: Hey, please refrain from
 24 clapping. The court reporter needs to be able to hear
 25 and we want to keep this moving so that everybody gets

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1 an opportunity to speak.
 2 JUDGE SANDOR: Our next witness is
 3 Robert Foss.
 4 WHEREUPON,
 5 ROBERT FOSS,
 6 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 7 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 8 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 10 your name for the record.
 11 THE WITNESS: Robert Foss, R-O-B-E-R-T
 12 F-O-S-S.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 14 address including the township.
 15 THE WITNESS: 1180 West Bayton Street,
 16 Alliance, Ohio, Washington Township.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 18 within the project area?
 19 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: Work or resid?
 21 THE WITNESS: Reside.
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And are you a
 23 party to the case?
 24 THE WITNESS: No.
 25 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Please go

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1 ahead.

2 THE WITNESS: Okay.

3 DIRECT STATEMENT

4 Thank you for the opportunity to

5 address the board regarding this important matter that

6 puts Ohio's prime farmland at risk. As you consider

7 approval of the facility, two of the important things

8 you must determine based on the Ohio Revised Code are,

9 one, that the facility will serve the public interest

10 and two, that the facility represents the minimum

11 adverse environmental impact.

12 Related to number one, here is why the

13 facility does not serve the public interest. In 1988,

14 the Office of Farmland Preservation was established

15 to, and I quote, "Permanently preserve Ohio farms and

16 agricultural production." The office's website says,

17 "Preserving this land is essential." Similarly, in

18 1982, the Farmland Preservation Act was established to

19 remove outside pressures that may cause farmland to be

20 converted to non-agricultural uses and this is exactly

21 what the proposed facility would do.

22 In 2022, the legislature enacted both

23 the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Program and the Save

24 Our Farmland and Protect our National Security Act.

25 These programs are evidence that keeping farmland in

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1 agricultural use serves the public interest. Don't be

2 misled by proponents who say solar will preserve the

3 land for future generations. You wouldn't shutter a

4 steel mill for 35 years to protect the steel industry

5 for future generations. The point of the legislation

6 is to keep the land in agricultural use to strengthen

7 Ohio's number-one industry, agriculture.

8 Now, related to the second point, which

9 states that the board must determine that the facility

10 represents the minimum adverse environmental impact.

11 I'm providing two maps, one of USDA data that confirms

12 the proposed facility is, in fact, located in an area

13 of prime farmland. The other map from the Ohio

14 Department of Natural Resources shows that there are

15 over one million acres of land in Ohio that have been

16 adversely affected by coal mining. Much of this land

17 is nearby, and much of it is already damaged; topsoil

18 gone, acid runoff. Many are essentially wastelands.

19 These and other subprime lands are alternatives to

20 prime farmland.

21 Therefore, please say no to the

22 unnecessary use of Ohio's most productive farmland for

23 technology that doesn't need productive land. Solar

24 technology does not need prime farmland, it just needs

25 land. I say it again, solar technology does not need

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1 prime farmland. A solar panel placed on wasteland

2 will generate just as much energy as one placed on

3 prime farmland. Please don't let them take our

4 state's most productive farmland. Thank you.

5 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from

6 counsel?

7 All right. Thank you for your

8 testimony.

9 Again, please refrain from clapping so

10 we can keep going. We have a long list of

11 witnesses tonight. Please.

12 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

13 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.

14 Our next witness is Shirley Maffei.

15 Massei.

16 Please raise your right hand.

17 WHEREUPON,

18 SHIRLEY MAFFEI,

19 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn

20 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

21 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

22 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell

23 your name for the record.

24 THE WITNESS: Shirley Maffei,

25 S-H-I-R-L-E-Y M-A-F-F-E-I.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your

2 address including the township.

3 THE WITNESS: 2741 Fox Avenue

4 Northeast, Minerva, Paris Township.

5 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside

6 within the project area?

7 THE WITNESS: I do not.

8 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the

9 case?

10 THE WITNESS: I do not.

11 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Please go ahead.

12 DIRECT STATEMENT

13 THE WITNESS: I have chosen to join

14 Washington Township in their opposition to large-scale

15 solar. I have lived and worked and paid taxes in

16 Stark County for 50 years. I'm here to testify that,

17 contrary to some information being passed around, the

18 Washington Township community is not losing interest

19 in opposing the large-scale industrial solar

20 development. As a matter of fact, there are 50

21 petitions signed and four memberships issued just in

22 the last few weeks. The opposition is still growing

23 as people in and outside of Washington Township are

24 still learning more about the concerns of solar.

25 On a personal level to the board and to

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1 Samsung, I would like to say I can tell you that these
 2 Washington Township families and farmers are
 3 salt-of-the-earth, grassroots people. They want
 4 nothing more than to live peaceably and quietly, in
 5 their beautiful agricultural rural area. They did not
 6 ask for this fight. They have families to raise and
 7 jobs to work. They have fields to plant and harvest,
 8 yet they are being made to jump through hoops to fight
 9 this invasion of 860 acres of solar panels, destroying
 10 tree lines, destroying wetlands, and destroying
 11 streams. This is their county, their neighborhood,
 12 their community. They pay taxes, they vote, they are
 13 civic-minded. They don't deserve to have property
 14 values plummet. They are saying no. Please do not
 15 issue a permit for this case.

16 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 17 counsel? Okay. Thank you.

18 Thank you for your testimony.

19 Our next witness is Aeva Maffei.

20 Please raise your right hand.

21 WHEREUPON,
 22 AEVA MAFFEI,
 23 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 24 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 25 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 2 your name for the record.

3 THE WITNESS: A-E-V-A M-A-F-F-E-I.

4 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 5 address including the township.

6 THE WITNESS: 2373 West 6th Street,
 7 McDonald, Ohio, it's a village, so Trumbull County.

8 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 9 within the project area?

10 THE WITNESS: I do not.

11 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And are you a
 12 party to the case?

13 THE WITNESS: I am not.

14 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Please go
 15 ahead.

16 DIRECT STATEMENT

17 THE WITNESS: I am here to express my
 18 opposition to the proposed large-solar complex.
 19 Recently I had the opportunity to engage with a group
 20 of community members who also oppose this project
 21 during a local community event. These individuals
 22 were respectful, helpful, and provided valuable
 23 education regarding their very legitimate concerns
 24 about the solar complex. The opposition group
 25 articulated their advocacy for the environment, the

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1 local economy, and sustainable alternatives. They do
 2 not involve this particular solar farm proposal. They
 3 emphasize the potential negative impacts that such a
 4 large-scale project could have on the local ecosystem
 5 and the economic well-being of our community. Their
 6 insights were enlightening and have reinforced my
 7 stance against the proposed solar complex.

8 I strongly, strongly encourage the Ohio
 9 Power Siting Board to consider the perspectives and
 10 concerns of these people, this group. Their
 11 dedication to finding more sustainable and
 12 community-friendly solutions is commendable. I hope
 13 you have the opportunity to engage with them like I
 14 did and I trust that their viewpoints will be given
 15 the serious consideration that they deserve. Thank
 16 you for your time and attention to this important
 17 matter.

18 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.

19 Any questions for the witness? Thank
 20 you.

21 Thank you for your testimony.

22 All right. I'll hand the witness list
 23 back off to Judge Asta.

24 JUDGE ASTA: Next is Keith Beaver.
 25 Please raise your right hand.

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 KEITH BEAVER,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.

8 THE WITNESS: Keith Beaver, K-E-I-T-H
 9 B-E-A-V-E-R.

10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 11 as township?

12 THE WITNESS: 13268 Louisville Street,
 13 Paris, Ohio, Washington Township.

14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work in
 15 the project area?

16 THE WITNESS: I live there, reside.

17 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 18 this case?

19 THE WITNESS: I am not.

20 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.

21 DIRECT STATEMENT

22 THE WITNESS: I would like to start by
 23 saying I'm 20 years old. I'm a first-generation
 24 farmer. I started our farm at our family's house when
 25 I was in high school. I became a farmer because there

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1 is nothing out there like having the pride and
 2 fulfillment in life like raising an animal and a crop.
 3 It helps the community, you feed them, the economy in
 4 our community, and it's what our community and
 5 township is based on, farming. It is no place for a
 6 multi-billion-dollar foreign company to come in and
 7 set up shop.
 8 My main concern is the lies that
 9 they've been telling. It was brought up earlier, but
 10 when we were at the Washington Elementary, they came
 11 in and they said, "We're not going to touch anything.
 12 We're coming into the farm fields, we're going to do a
 13 little grade work. It's going to be great. It's
 14 going to be green. Everybody's going to be happy."
 15 Now they want some trees cut down, approximately
 16 7.4 acres. They didn't want any before, now they want
 17 some. Who knows what they're going to want by the end
 18 of it. You give a company an inch to make money,
 19 they're going to take a mile. That's how it works.
 20 They are a business, not a charity.
 21 And another point that I'd like to
 22 bring up is all the great union workers that are here
 23 that have spoke, you love the union. I work concrete
 24 most of the time, do the farming on the side. They
 25 are estimating how many jobs this is going to bring.

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1 They're estimating the money that we are going to get
 2 back to the community. Nothing is guaranteed. That
 3 is so life in a trade, can't do anything about it.
 4 But at the end of the day, you get to
 5 get in your car and go home to places that are far
 6 away from here, sounds like and I believe if we are
 7 going to put money in front of the people that are
 8 actually going to be affected by it when the project's
 9 done, everybody gets to go home, count their cash, but
 10 the people stuck here, this is where our homes are.
 11 This is where we were born and raised. The people
 12 here are the ones that get affected. They're the ones
 13 that get the stick at the end of it and they say,
 14 "Well, we're green, we're all good. We all made a
 15 bunch of money." That is why I believe that this
 16 solar project in our farming community, close knit,
 17 take care of your neighbor, is not a good idea. Thank
 18 you.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 20 Please refrain from applause. Thank
 21 you.
 22 Our next witness is Aaron Brown.
 23 Please raise your right hand.
 24 //
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 AARON BROWN,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: It's Aaron Brown,
 9 A-A-R-O-N B-R-O-W-N.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 11 as township?
 12 THE WITNESS: It's 5545 Nave Street
 13 Southwest that's Canton, Ohio. I'm in Perry Township.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: I do not.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: Are you a party to this
 18 case?
 19 THE WITNESS: I am not.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 21 THE WITNESS: All right.
 22 DIRECT STATEMENT
 23 THE WITNESS: Hello. Thanks for the
 24 opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Aaron Brown
 25 and I've been a lifelong resident of Stark County. I

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1 live in Perry Township. I've been a member of the
 2 IBEW for 25 years. As someone who has seen the
 3 transformative impact of energy generation projects
 4 firsthand for more than 25 years, I came here tonight
 5 to talk about how energy projects bring strength to
 6 the communities that host them. I'm proud to support
 7 the Stark Solar project, and I believe the long-term
 8 benefits of this project hold immense promise for our
 9 future here in Stark County and in the neighboring
 10 counties and the whole state.
 11 One of the key aspects of this project
 12 is job creation. We have been building energy
 13 projects since we were founded in 1891 and our union
 14 members will play a pivotal role in making this
 15 project a success. I have full confidence in our
 16 ability to deliver on this project just as we have on
 17 other energy generation projects, gas turbine energy
 18 generation, transmission, battery, and other solar
 19 projects here in Ohio.
 20 This project will produce electricity
 21 with absolutely no pollution at all. I have seen
 22 these solar projects at completion firsthand. With
 23 all the new stipulations and/or recommendations from
 24 the state or local citizens, the developers have made
 25 great strides to create a project that fits our

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1 communities they are built in while preserving
2 agricultural land. Whether it's the setbacks or the
3 animal friendly-fencing or the pollinators that are
4 added, these projects are now setting the bar high for
5 future projects.
6 The truth is I support all forms of
7 energy. When our members are working on downed power
8 lines or services that have been disconnected from the
9 resident's house or business, we don't care what the
10 source of electricity is coming from as long as it
11 gets our community's lights back on and power
12 restored. This project is just another opportunity to
13 make sure we can keep the lights on. Modernizing our
14 grid and diversifying our sources of energy to add
15 more solar alongside other traditional sources of
16 energy will help us make sure our power stays on one
17 one source fails during an extreme weather event,
18 which we've seen in other states where gas plants
19 failed to come online while wind and solar plants kept
20 pumping out the power. With new advances in energy
21 storage, now we can produce power with renewable
22 energy when it's cheap and abundant, store it, and
23 then put it back into the grid when we need it. As the
24 Ohio solar industry continues to grow, the IBEW will
25 continue to support these good paying energy sector

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1 jobs that are "diversing" our power grid and powering
2 our communities.
3 Stark Solar, with over 57 million of
4 revenue over the next 40 years and over at least 200
5 jobs on the horizon, isn't just about racking up
6 panels in these land owners' fields, it's about
7 building the future of this county and our state. I
8 respectfully ask the Ohio Power Siting Board to not
9 stand in the way of economic growth, local job
10 creation, and a stronger power grid to support the
11 Stark Solar project. Thank you for your time.
12 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
13 Please refrain from applause.
14 JUDGE SANDOR: Again, please stop
15 applauding.
16 Sorry.
17 JUDGE ASTA: We're asking everybody,
18 regardless of opposition or approval of the project,
19 if you could please refrain from applause so that our
20 court reporter can hear everybody and we can ask if
21 counsel has any questions.
22 That being the case, do you have any
23 questions?
24 MR. MCDONNELL: No, Your Honor. Thank
25 you.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Okay.
2 Our next witness is Curt Moore.
3 Please raise your right hand.
4 WHEREUPON,
5 CURT MOORE,
6 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
7 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
8 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
9 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
10 your name for the record.
11 THE WITNESS: My name is Curt Moore,
12 C-U-R-T M-O-O-R-E.
13 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
14 as township?
15 THE WITNESS: 6820 Maple Brook Avenue,
16 East Canton, Ohio, 44730, Osnaburg Township.
17 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
18 within the project area?
19 THE WITNESS: Work.
20 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
21 this case?
22 THE WITNESS: No, ma'am.
23 JUDGE ASTA: Please proceed.
24 DIRECT STATEMENT
25 THE WITNESS: Ladies and gentlemen of

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1 the Ohio Power Siting Board, I'm Curt Moore. I'm a
2 journeyman inside wireman of IBEW Local 540 and the
3 president for Local 540. I'm honored to speak to you
4 about a subject that is not just timely, but
5 profoundly essential for the future of this community
6 and the great state of Ohio, the development of the
7 utility-scale Stark Solar project.
8 The quest for sustainable energy
9 solutions has never been more pressing. Among all the
10 options available, utility-scale solar stands out as
11 both a beacon of hope and a practical necessity. It
12 may not be the sole answer, but it's part of the
13 solution. Utility-scale solar projects are crucial
14 because they represent a monumental shift to more
15 sustainable energy sources. As our community's
16 population continues to grow and industrial activity
17 intensifies, the strain on Stark County and the great
18 state of Ohio's resources has reached unprecedented
19 levels. Solar energy provides a powerful antidote to
20 this strain. These projects offer a renewable energy
21 source that does not deplete our nature's resources.
22 Moreover, the Stark Solar project can
23 significantly reduce our dependence on imported
24 electricity. As Ohio being a net importer of
25 electricity, this solar project enhances energy

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1 security and also stabilizes our local infrastructure.
 2 As we face the challenge of a high demand for
 3 electricity, the importance of transitioning to
 4 reliable, locally-sourced energy cannot be overstated.
 5 Utility-scale solar projects are not just important,
 6 they're obviously necessary for a sustainable future.
 7 As we strive to meet our energy needs, we must scale
 8 our solutions to match the magnitude of the problem.
 9 Solar farms, with their ability to generate power on a
 10 massive scale, provide the necessary complement to
 11 other sources like wind, hydro, coal, natural gas, and
 12 nuclear energy power plants.

13 In addition, these projects provide
 14 economic benefits that create jobs, stimulate local
 15 economies, and foster technological innovations. By
 16 investing in solar, we invest in the future, both
 17 economically and electrically. Furthermore,
 18 utility-scale solar projects pave the way for more
 19 resilient energy grid. Distributed solar power
 20 enhances grid stability, reduces the risk of a
 21 widespread outages, and offers communities a level of
 22 energy security.

23 In conclusion, the development of the
 24 Stark Solar project is not just an option, it is an
 25 imperative. It is crucial and necessary for ensuring

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1 a sustainable and resilient energy future. Let us
 2 embrace this opportunity with the urgency and
 3 determination it deserves. By supporting and
 4 investing in Stark Solar, we take a definitive step
 5 towards a reliable, diversified, and more sustainable
 6 community for ourselves and the future. Thank you.

7 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 8 Any questions for this witness?
 9 MR. MCDONNELL: No. No questions,
 10 Your Honor. Thank you.
 11 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 12 Next witness is Logan Hammer.
 13 Please raise your right hand.
 14 WHEREUPON,
 15 LOGAN HAMMER,
 16 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 17 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 18 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 19 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 20 your name for the record.
 21 THE WITNESS: Logan Hammer, L-O-G-A-N
 22 H-A-M-M-E-R.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 24 as township?
 25 THE WITNESS: 812 16th Street

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1 Northeast, Massillon, Ohio 44646.
 2 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work in
 3 the project area?
 4 THE WITNESS: No, I do not.
 5 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 6 this case?
 7 THE WITNESS: No, I am not.
 8 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 9 DIRECT STATEMENT
 10 THE WITNESS: Though I am not a
 11 resident of Washington Township, I have lived in Stark
 12 County for my entire life. I would like to see great
 13 things happen in our area, one of those things being a
 14 power grid not solely dependent on fossil fuels. We
 15 in Stark County live in the big city shadows of
 16 Cleveland and Akron. We don't need to build
 17 skyscrapers or host professional sports teams to have
 18 something to be proud of here. According to the Ohio
 19 Power Siting Board's website, there are no
 20 utility-scale solar arrays in Summit or Cuyahoga
 21 County. At this juncture, we have the opportunity to
 22 cast back that shadow with light generated by
 23 Northeast Ohio's first utility-scale solar array.
 24 This wouldn't be a step towards a better future, but a
 25 leap for Stark County and the state of Ohio as a

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1 whole.
 2 There is a distinction that needs to be
 3 made here today between the degree of consideration
 4 that is owed to public opinion and to public interest
 5 along with the variable nuance that punctuates the
 6 degree of consideration depending on the particular
 7 issue in discussion. In a previous meeting that I
 8 personally attended regarding the development of solar
 9 energy projects in Stark County, the public opinion in
 10 opposition of the projects was seemingly influenced by
 11 misinformation or disregard of fact and coherence
 12 altogether. This is a common tragedy in today's
 13 digital age where the spread of information and ideas
 14 has been made so easy that it can be weaponized to
 15 benefit an agenda. I listen to one man make a
 16 short-sighted claim that there aren't as many mills
 17 and production facilities as there used to be, so the
 18 demand on the grid is low. He made no citation of
 19 that, but if that is true, that vacuum of demand is
 20 quickly being filled by electric vehicle charging
 21 stations and data centers.
 22 As an electrician, I've worked in three
 23 of these data centers in Northeast Ohio. Taken from a
 24 statenews.org article, an International Energy Agency
 25 study found that data centers could account for

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1 6 percent of all power use in the U.S. by 2026. AEP
 2 Ohio President, Marc Reitter, was quoted as saying
 3 that AEP will double its peak by 2028 due to these
 4 centers and that they have had to halt any new
 5 projects to avoid damaging the grid.
 6 Another point of opposition that was
 7 made was "I don't want to have to look at it," "it"
 8 being a solar array. We can weigh the options here.
 9 Would you rather have farmland leased for the use of
 10 solar generation, something that is absolutely silent,
 11 can be obscured by plant and tree lines, and will
 12 leave the ground still viable for agriculture when it
 13 is decommissioned or have it sold to residential
 14 developers that will corrupt the landscape with
 15 houses, paved roads, and break the serenity of country
 16 life with the constant sound of suburban traffic and
 17 residents. The farmers that willfully engage in
 18 contract with Samsung are looking to supplement their
 19 income and leasing a portion of their land to be used
 20 as a solar array is the least detrimental and most
 21 beneficial to us all as a community.
 22 The public opinion in opposition of the
 23 project has been the loudest in the room, thus gaining
 24 more consideration than the matter of public interest.
 25 It is in the public's interest to diversify where we

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1 get our energy from. The worst-case scenario in a
 2 disruption of generation of a solar array is cloud
 3 cover or damage resulting from extreme weather event.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you. That's three
 5 minutes.
 6 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 7 JUDGE ASTA: Any questions for the
 8 witness?
 9 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions, thank
 10 you.
 11 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 12 Our next witness is Andy Gatts.
 13 Please raise your right hand.
 14 WHEREUPON,
 15 ANDREW GATTS,
 16 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 17 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 18 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 19 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 20 your name for the record.
 21 THE WITNESS: Andrew Gatts, A-N-D-Y
 22 G-A-T-T-S.
 23 JUDGE ASTA: My apologies.
 24 THE WITNESS: That's all right.
 25 Everybody gets it wrong.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Please provide your
 2 address as well as township, please.
 3 THE WITNESS: 6100 Wiclif Street
 4 Canton, Ohio 44721.
 5 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. And do you live or
 6 work in the project area?
 7 THE WITNESS: I work.
 8 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. And are you a party
 9 to this case?
 10 THE WITNESS: No.
 11 JUDGE ASTA: Please continue.
 12 DIRECT STATEMENT
 13 THE WITNESS: I'm a fourth-generation
 14 farmer. Our family bought our farm in 1968. My
 15 grandpa moved here from Iowa to farm land here. Our
 16 property is a low-lying property with wetland and the
 17 solar fields will be butting right up next to it.
 18 When these solar fields are put in, the compaction is
 19 done on the fields with the equipment because on
 20 average, equipment for construction is 10,000 pounds.
 21 That will compact the soil. I don't care if you don't
 22 mean to do it or not, but it will compact it. What
 23 happens when it rains and floods onto our land and
 24 causing more wetlands to expand onto our property?
 25 Who's going to be responsible for that?

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1 What happens if there's chemicals that
 2 come out of these solar panels and cause issues with
 3 our local creeks and our wetlands and our fields and
 4 our pastures that we graze our cows on? I know
 5 Samsung is very disrespectful because they didn't even
 6 send the right paperwork to the right fire department.
 7 They sent it to Alliance Fire Department. They didn't
 8 send it to Washington Township Fire Department. So my
 9 wife is a firefighter EMT. How would I feel if she's
 10 got to go into a fire if those catch on fire and they
 11 don't even know how to put it out? It's put on the
 12 community to figure that out, pay for it, and send
 13 them to the training and provide all the equipment.
 14 That shouldn't be on the local people.
 15 Also, the local union companies saying
 16 that it provides so much work for them, it provides it
 17 for the workers. The local electrical union couldn't
 18 secure the contract for the 62 Amazon. That was done
 19 by an Akron Speelman Electricity Company and
 20 Olman [ph]. They brought workers in from the local
 21 union, but all the profit went to Akron and Cleveland.
 22 It wasn't kept in local. It was just the paychecks
 23 that were kept in local, not the profit.
 24 JUDGE ASTA: Please refrain from
 25 interrupting the witness.

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1 You may proceed.

2 THE WITNESS: I would suggest we move

3 these to strip mines, landfills. I mean, what's the

4 landfills going to do? Just sit there. There's one

5 on 30, down on 30 or 77 south of Canton. Big

6 landfill. We can put solar fields there. And don't

7 forget what money they promised us to invest in the

8 local schools and stuff, that's over 30 years and

9 that's not a balloon payment. So you can't build new

10 schools with the promise of, "Hey, we'll get you your

11 money in 30 years." Thank you.

12 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

13 Any questions for this witness?

14 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,

15 Your Honor.

16 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

17 JUDGE SANDOR: And we reached 25 out of

18 50 registered witnesses, so we're about halfway

19 through just to kind of let everyone know where we're

20 at.

21 Also, for everyone who's remaining,

22 who's also still signed up on the list, if you're in

23 agreement with what someone has already expressed

24 earlier in their testimony and you merely wish to

25 express your support or opposition, our staff does

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1 have forms in the back where you can sign your name

2 and that will become a part of the official record in

3 this case. Of course, we're still willing to take any

4 testimony this evening, but if you'd like to

5 short-circuit it and just express your opposition or

6 support, you can do it in that manner. And then,

7 again, you can also write in comments to staff that

8 will be submitted on the case's case docket online.

9 Thank you.

10 JUDGE ASTA: So our next witness is

11 Stacy Schwartz [ph]. Stacy Schwartz [ph], going once.

12 Okay. moving on.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: Judges, we

14 need a staff member down here so we can get a coffee

15 break, so we can find the restrooms.

16 JUDGE ASTA: Yeah, I mean, we can go

17 ahead and take a break then.

18 JUDGE SANDOR: So halfway through.

19 Yeah, let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break.

20 JUDGE ASTA: We'll meet back here

21 at --

22 JUDGE SANDOR: 6:43. Sorry.

23 JUDGE ASTA: Yes.

24 THE REPORTER: Going off the record at

25 6:33 p.m.

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1 (Off the record.)

2 THE REPORTER: Back on the record at

3 6:48.

4 JUDGE ASTA: And on deck is Gene

5 Biggin [ph].

6 Please raise your right hand,

7 Mr. Wallace.

8 WHEREUPON,

9 FRED WALLACE,

10 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn

11 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

12 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

13 JUDGE ASTA: And please state your name

14 and spell it for the record.

15 THE WITNESS: Fred Wallace, F-R-E-D

16 W-A-L-L-A-C-E. I live at 4471 Anderson Avenue, that's

17 Homeworth. That's Washington Township.

18 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work

19 within the project area?

20 THE WITNESS: Yes.

21 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to

22 this case?

23 THE WITNESS: No.

24 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.

25 //

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1 DIRECT STATEMENT

2 THE WITNESS: I was informed of a

3 proposed solar project in Washington Township in

4 January 2024. I attended two meetings at Washington

5 Elementary School, the same elementary school I

6 attended as a child, as did my children and my now

7 grandchildren. Why would they propose a solar project

8 within a few miles away from our elementary school?

9 The fertile land in Washington Township has taken

10 generations of farmers to make the land productive and

11 a place to call home. Now the company named Samsung

12 C&T wants to lease the land and possibly make it

13 unusable for farming for generations to come. Forty

14 years is at least two generations.

15 Land owners who lease their land may

16 think they should be able to do anything they want

17 with it. We know this is not an absolute. A

18 landowner may want to set their wheat fields on fire,

19 but that would be illegal. Farmers cannot spread

20 manure on their fields whenever they wish. They

21 cannot start a new junkyard or a trash waste center or

22 over apply fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides,

23 which is controlled by the state. Zoning laws

24 prohibit land owners and home owners from doing

25 whatever they wish, regardless of ownership.

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1 Neighbors should be protected from potential hazards
 2 such as pollution from water runoff into neighbor
 3 water wells.
 4 Telling neighbors there will be water
 5 tests does not make us feel any better. Water testing
 6 after installation only tells us if there's pollution
 7 at that time. We need a 100-percent guarantee that
 8 there will never be pollution of our land, water, or
 9 air because of this project. The panels using this
 10 project are not American made. Samsung stated these
 11 solar panels will be sourced overseas. Has anyone
 12 tested these solar panels? Has the lessee, Samsung,
 13 or Ohio EPA or the U.S. EPA conducted studies to
 14 determine the effects of the project, what effects the
 15 project will have on the neighborhood over the next 40
 16 years or 20 years or ten years?
 17 I understand the electrical union wants
 18 jobs, but what about all the workers that will lose
 19 their jobs because of this project? Why do they not
 20 insist on U.S. workers to make solar panels instead of
 21 foreign labor? Many of these projects are sold off
 22 before their completion. If the U.S. taxpayers did
 23 not fund and provide tax credits for these projects,
 24 they would never be profitable.
 25 Ben Franklin had a method to determine

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1 issues: list the pros on one side of the paper and
 2 cons on the other. In this example, the pros are
 3 money for workers, money for the developer, and money
 4 for the lessees. The cons are too many to list in
 5 just three minutes. The Washington Township Trustees,
 6 14 of 17 townships, and the Stark County commissioners
 7 voted against wind and solar projects. Our school
 8 district will receive their funding regardless of this
 9 project. In a meeting at Washington Elementary
 10 School, Samsung admitted they did not know if the
 11 power will stay in Stark County. Maybe California
 12 could use it, maybe any other state, but for public
 13 interest, it should stay within the state of Ohio. It
 14 should not be sent out of state. Thank you.
 15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 Any questions for this witness?
 17 Thank you, Mr. Wallace.
 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: Next is Gene Biggin [ph]
 20 or Bogan [ph]. And next on deck after that is Danny
 21 Schmucker. Okay. Seeing no Gene, Danny Schmucker.
 22 And then on deck after Mr. Schmucker is
 23 Pete J. Talley [ph].
 24 Please raise your right hand.
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 DANNY SCHMUCKER,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: Danny Schmucker,
 9 D-A-N-N-Y S-C-H-M-U-C-K-E-R. I live at 12316
 10 Louisville Street, Louisville, that is Washington
 11 Township.
 12 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work in
 13 the project area?
 14 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 15 JUDGE ASTA: And are you a party to
 16 this case?
 17 THE WITNESS: No.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 19 DIRECT STATEMENT
 20 THE WITNESS: Farmland is diminishing
 21 at significant rates throughout the country. The most
 22 recent ag census stated 20.1 million acres of farmland
 23 was lost between 2017 and 2022. That is 7.65 acres
 24 per minute. Stark County is no exception to this as
 25 the county's comprehensive plan states that since

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1 2002, farmland has dropped by 6 1/2 percent in the
 2 county. We must protect our prime farmland for the
 3 security of our nation's food supply. Washington
 4 Township, according to the county's comprehensive
 5 plan, is heavily prime farmland and I can attest to
 6 this being a Washington Township farmer. I oppose
 7 large wind and solar projects in Washington Township
 8 because these prime farmlands should remain productive
 9 to support our community, county, and country's needs.
 10 There are over 20,000 acres of vacant
 11 land in our county that would be better suited for
 12 this type of development and those acres are
 13 significantly located outside of our township. Not
 14 only would these acres of removed farmland from being
 15 productive to our life sustaining needs for 40-plus
 16 years, but this land will never in our lifetime be
 17 returned to quality land. Thousands of piles many
 18 feet deep will be put into the ground, roadways within
 19 the project areas, underground wires, HDD, along with
 20 soil compaction and neglect for decades, is not fixed
 21 overnight. This type of damage to rural land impacts
 22 not only the project area, but also those around it.
 23 Field tile damage will drain into many other
 24 properties. Wetlands and water damage could impact
 25 water quality for miles. I'll oppose large renewable

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1 energy projects in Washington Township because losing
 2 7.65 acres of farmland per minute is way more serious
 3 than my rural view being destroyed.
 4 I've heard a lot about jobs tonight,
 5 but almost all the jobs talked about are temporary
 6 jobs. How many folks here tonight are currently
 7 looking for jobs? But no one has mentioned the effect
 8 on agricultural jobs. Agricultural jobs are
 9 year-round and permanent. And all of them live and
 10 spend their money here in Stark County. And the
 11 businesses they work for support the community. When
 12 is the last time a union has bought a kid's 4-H
 13 project at the county fair? Our township roads are
 14 barely wide enough to pass a car, let alone loaded
 15 semi-trucks. Will our school buses be able to pass
 16 these trucks? The project is expected to have 17 to
 17 19 trucks per megawatt.
 18 We've heard a lot about money and jobs
 19 tonight, but this project is much bigger than this.
 20 This is our home. The Canton city mayor and city
 21 council members have shown support to this project,
 22 but they have no involvement in Washington Township,
 23 so why are they not focusing on the city they
 24 represent instead of getting involved in the project
 25 15-plus miles away? Thank you.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 2 Any questions? Thank you.
 3 Again, please refrain from the
 4 applause.
 5 Pete J. Talley [ph].
 6 Okay. And with that, I will hand this
 7 back to Judge Sandor for the next round of witnesses.
 8 JUDGE SANDOR: Our next registered
 9 witness is Stephen E. Connor. And on deck is
 10 Jerry Durley [ph].
 11 MR. CONNOR: Hi.
 12 JUDGE SANDOR: Please raise your right
 13 hand.
 14 WHEREUPON,
 15 STEPHEN E. CONNOR,
 16 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 17 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 18 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state spell your
 20 name for the record.
 21 THE WITNESS: Steven Edward Connor
 22 S-T-E-P-H-E-N E. Connor, C-O-N-N-O-R.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 24 address including the township.
 25 THE WITNESS: 8112 Berkeley Road

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1 Northwest, North Canton, Ohio.
 2 JUDGE SANDOR: Township if you have
 3 one.
 4 THE WITNESS: It is Plain.
 5 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 6 within the project area?
 7 THE WITNESS: I don't work anywhere
 8 currently. I've been retired quite a while.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you reside? Are you
 10 a party to the case?
 11 THE WITNESS: No, I live in Plain
 12 Township and I am not the party to the case.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 14 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 15 DIRECT STATEMENT
 16 THE WITNESS: I've listened to what's
 17 been said so far and it seems to me much of the divide
 18 is based on whether or not you accept that global
 19 warming, man-caused global warming is a real thing.
 20 Personally, I'm Catholic. The pope has spoken on this
 21 issue and he says, to quote one paragraph, "Eight
 22 years have passed since I published the Encyclical
 23 Letter 'Laudato si,' when I wanted to share with all
 24 of you, my brothers and sisters, of our suffering
 25 planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our

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1 common home. Yet with the passage of time, I have
 2 realized that our responses have not been adequate
 3 while the world in which we live is collapsing and
 4 maybe nearing the breaking point. In addition to this
 5 possibility, it is indubitable that the impact of
 6 climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives
 7 and families of many persons. We will feel its
 8 effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of
 9 employment, access to resources, housing, forced
 10 migration, et cetera."
 11 If this is indeed the case, one of the
 12 primary concerns we should all have is reducing the
 13 use of fossil fuels, which is the cause of these bad
 14 things and large-scale solar is likely to be one of
 15 the best ways to do this. The staff of the Siting
 16 Commission has ruled that this plan meets at least six
 17 of the seven requirements, the other requirement being
 18 basically political and NIMBY. I understand that.
 19 And it's not just to solar that occurs, also to wind.
 20 But much of this seems to be based on misinformation.
 21 Thank you. That's about it. I believe that the
 22 impact of global warming and change of climate will
 23 impact agriculture in this area far worse than
 24 anything the solar would do. You might want to look
 25 at climate.gov and see the projections. Thank you.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: And that's time.
 2 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 3 counsel?
 4 MR. MCDONNELL: No.
 5 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 6 testimony. Next up is Jerry Gurley [ph]. Seeing
 7 none, Larry Watch [ph]. Seeing none, next is Gary
 8 Ramsey. And then on deck is Cathy Krupko.
 9 Please raise your right hand.
 10 WHEREUPON,
 11 GARY RAMSEY,
 12 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 13 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 14 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 15 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 16 your name for the record.
 17 THE WITNESS: Gary Ramsey, G-A-R-Y
 18 R-A-M-S-E-Y.
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 20 address including the township.
 21 THE WITNESS: 7730 State Street
 22 Northeast, Louisville, Nimishillen Township.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 24 within the project area?
 25 THE WITNESS: No.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 2 case?
 3 THE WITNESS: No.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 5 DIRECT STATEMENT
 6 THE WITNESS: I just came to support
 7 this project tonight. I've had solar panels on my
 8 barn for ten years and never had one second's trouble
 9 with it. It's always been a great source of my power.
 10 I strongly support this project. Thank you.
 11 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 12 counsel?
 13 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 14 Your Honor. Thank you.
 15 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Thank you.
 16 Next up is Cathy Krupko and on deck is
 17 Tomas Calez.
 18 Please raise your right hand.
 19 WHEREUPON,
 20 CATHY KRUPKO,
 21 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 22 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 23 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 24 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 25 your name for the record.

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1 THE WITNESS: My name is Cathy Krupko,
 2 C-A-T-H-Y K-R-U-P-K-O.
 3 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 4 address including the township.
 5 THE WITNESS: 4727 Anderson Avenue
 6 Northeast, Homeworth, Ohio 44634, Washington Township.
 7 JUDGE SANDOR: And do you work or
 8 reside within the project area?
 9 THE WITNESS: I reside.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: And are you party to the
 11 case?
 12 THE WITNESS: No.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 14 DIRECT STATEMENT
 15 THE WITNESS: I'm a 22-year resident of
 16 Washington Township and an elected member of the
 17 Marlinton Local School Board. I'm a nurse, wife,
 18 mother of seven, and grandmother of 15. My comments
 19 are my personal views and do not in any way represent
 20 the Marlinton Local School Board. This dual role,
 21 however, places me in a unique position, solidly
 22 between a rock and a hard spot. Honestly, our school
 23 district is in need of funds. We could sure stand to
 24 air condition this place. We have not passed a levy,
 25 however, in over 20 years. The tax money we receive

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1 is paid to us -- I'm sorry, a new levy at a rate from
 2 20 years ago. Operating and maintenance costs
 3 continue to rise, yet the funds we receive do not go
 4 up at the same rate. For further funding, we try to
 5 pass levies, apply for grants, and, of course, we do
 6 receive money from the Nexus pipeline, but not at the
 7 amount originally proposed.
 8 So here comes Samsung C&T offering us
 9 \$34 million over 40 years, which is approximately \$625
 10 per year with no inflation built in. And it might
 11 seem like a good solution for our schools, except we
 12 don't have any answer on how this sum of money will be
 13 provided to the school. Neither the community nor the
 14 school has any say so in this. The county
 15 commissioners and Samsung C&T would determine this at
 16 a later date. The potential for negative financial
 17 impact exists with both manners of payment.
 18 People should be able to make decisions
 19 about their property, but not when it infringes on the
 20 rights of others, especially their neighbors. The
 21 county does decide for us if we can build on our own
 22 property and where. They set zoning for businesses.
 23 They should be instrumental in whether or not a solar
 24 farm can be built. This would be the case in
 25 Washington Township, except for the fact that Samsung

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1 C&T filed a bill shortly before a House bill was
 2 passed that would have prohibited an unwanted solar
 3 farm.
 4 As a member of the community and the
 5 school board, I'm concerned about the possible effects
 6 of the solar farm. These are only some of the
 7 questions that remain unanswered. For example, what
 8 about the properties that are adjacent to the farm?
 9 Were they consulted? What will happen to our property
 10 values? If I want to sell my home, will the area
 11 still be as appealing to buyers as it once was? What
 12 about the environment, ecology, and wildlife? Where
 13 and how will solar panels be disposed of with no
 14 facilities available for that purpose? What happens
 15 to the chemicals released when another lithium battery
 16 substation catches fire and what could this do to our
 17 air, water, and land? How do we get our children who
 18 are at school out of the building safely? Is there a
 19 potential for us to become like East Palestine or
 20 could we suffer an incident similar to the one in
 21 Nantucket where beaches were closed because of a wind
 22 turbine that broke into pieces with fiberglass now
 23 floating in the water?
 24 I expect to be heavily criticized for
 25 my opinions by a local group that includes one of the

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1 individuals personally profiting from this solar farm.
 2 I believe it's time to do what's in our best interest
 3 and not those of the corporation trying to force this
 4 project on us. I believe our community needs to
 5 support our schools. I believe that we should be
 6 looking at other options for producing solar energy
 7 before our community is permanently altered to benefit
 8 a few individuals --
 9 JUDGE ASTA: And that's time.
 10 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.
 11 JUDGE SANDOR: Question, counsel?
 12 Okay.
 13 Thank you for your testimony.
 14 Our next witness is Tomas Calez.
 15 MR. CALEZ: Calez.
 16 JUDGE SANDOR: Calez.
 17 MR. CALEZ: It's all right. I've been
 18 dealing with it for 35 years.
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Sorry to add to the
 20 pile.
 21 MR. CALEZ: It's part of everything;
 22 right?
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: Please raise your right
 24 hand.
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 TOMAS CALEZ,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: My name is Tomas Calez,
 9 T-O-M-A-S C-A-L-E-Z.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 11 address, including township.
 12 THE WITNESS: I live at 8056 Allen
 13 Drive and that's in Alliance and it's Marlboro
 14 Township.
 15 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 16 within the project area?
 17 THE WITNESS: I do not.
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 19 case?
 20 THE WITNESS: No.
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 22 THE WITNESS: All right.
 23 DIRECT STATEMENT
 24 THE WITNESS: I would like to first
 25 thank everybody for taking their time to express their

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1 right as citizens of this great country to solve our
 2 disagreements in a diplomatic process instead of acts
 3 of any kind of violence. Another right I want to
 4 address is everybody's right as a land owner should
 5 have the right to choose what they can and can't do
 6 with their company with the extent of not producing
 7 any harm to themselves or any of the neighboring
 8 properties. For example, this project. All this
 9 project, we can work out bonds, we can work out
 10 contracts to make sure that we all come to agreements
 11 on each side.
 12 I do agree that we do need farm lands
 13 and the lands that we need, but the question is what
 14 happens if that farmer can't afford to farm on that
 15 land? They are forced to sell their property, which
 16 then they would be losing their farmland for
 17 generations. Whether the option is where they can
 18 still have their property, not to be forced away from
 19 it, lease it, and to help actually keep their land in
 20 the family. And they'll be able to still make a
 21 profit without the land possibly going unused.
 22 Instead, people pass mass hysteria fear tactics to
 23 scare people and to scare other people. What is this,
 24 like, the Salem witch trials here? Plus, as for me,
 25 being a proud union member, I live here, I work here,

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1 and I go home here.

2 Looking forward towards the future,

3 those who oppose this plan are not looking at the most

4 important thing, our children. The funding for this

5 would provide the school district alone and would help

6 provide a better education, a safer facility, and I

7 haven't seen a levy being passed here for about the 25

8 years I've been here. I can't remember the last time

9 the levy was passed. This would help support our

10 school district and our children, to help support

11 that. Those who oppose show no consideration for the

12 safety, the future for these students here.

13 The future to help improve our grid is

14 what we need now more than ever and I fear that with

15 this being done and everything, that we will not be

16 able to have that choice and someone will make the

17 choice for us to improve that grid. I understand that

18 the fear of the whole being out of your comfort zone

19 and everything, and it is very easy to say no instead

20 of saying yes to something, especially if you don't

21 understand the full details. We have an opportunity

22 here to improve our future in a safe and green way, to

23 pave a better future for our children, community, and

24 district. I appreciate the time you guys let me speak

25 on behalf of being an Marlington school district

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1 resident, a former graduate, electrician, and a 24/7,

2 full-time father. And I still see that the AC doesn't

3 work here, so ...

4 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions, counsel?

5 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,

6 Your Honor. Thank you.

7 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your

8 testimony.

9 Next up is Brit Steiner and on deck is

10 Logan Dostal.

11 Please raise right hand.

12 WHEREUPON,

13 BRIT STEINER,

14 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn

15 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but

16 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

17 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell

18 your name for the record.

19 THE WITNESS: Brit Steiner. Sorry, my

20 handwriting is terrible. B-R-I-T S-T-E-I-N-E-R.

21 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your

22 address including the township.

23 THE WITNESS: 2624 Dunkey Drive

24 Northwest, Canton, Ohio, Jackson Township.

25 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside

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1 within the project area?

2 THE WITNESS: I do not.

3 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the

4 case?

5 THE WITNESS: No.

6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.

7 DIRECT STATEMENT

8 THE WITNESS: I'm an environmental

9 scientist born and raised in rural Ohio. Ninety-seven

10 percent of scientists agree the planet is warming due

11 to human activity. Getting 97 percent of scientists

12 to agree on anything is nearly impossible. The United

13 States is the largest emitter of greenhouse gas

14 emissions, historically speaking. We have created

15 this problem. The northern hemisphere is likely to be

16 much less impacted than the countries in the southern

17 hemisphere where over 100 million lives have already

18 been lost to climate change. I have witnessed this

19 first hand as someone working in international

20 development for 15 years. Ohio is increasingly

21 considered a haven for climate change, which is why I

22 recently moved my family back here a year ago. We

23 will enjoy sustainable conditions for long after many

24 perish. To whom much is given, much is also expected.

25 We must do our part as Americans and

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1 Ohioans to decrease greenhouse gas emissions which

2 means that as our energy needs increase, we must

3 increase renewable energy and quickly. Solar is our

4 area's best answer to the renewable energy challenge.

5 We don't have wind and we don't have water necessary.

6 Misinformation is increasingly rampant around solar

7 projects. This is strategic, this is intentional. In

8 April of 2024, there was a recent article compiled by

9 Columbia Law rebutting the 33 false claims about

10 solar. I would be happy to submit it as part of my

11 testimony and I would encourage anyone else to look it

12 up.

13 Within this I will read off a few of

14 the misconceptions, the myths that I've heard people

15 repeat here and explain to you as many as I can about

16 why they are false. "Solar is harmful to health,

17 human health." False. The frequency emitted from

18 solar panels is equivalent to that of toaster ovens.

19 All materials within the solar panels non-soluble to

20 water and they are also non-volatile. "Human

21 value" -- sorry. "Home values decrease around solar

22 projects." False. They are shown to increase and in

23 the closest areas there will be a potentially a very

24 minor decrease. "Biodiversity is harmed." False.

25 When using previously developed land such as farmland,

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1 like in this case, biodiversity is not only unharmed,
 2 but often increased, especially when wildlife
 3 corridors are created and habitat patches are also
 4 created. That can be worked into the contract.
 5 I will leave it there in going through
 6 the false claims. I would just finish by saying I
 7 appreciate how concerned so many people are here
 8 today. Science can be overwhelming, things like this
 9 can be overwhelming. And the pride, honestly, in this
 10 community, the way it's come together is, quite
 11 frankly, beautiful, even if I think I disagree with a
 12 lot of the people who've coalesced.
 13 JUDGE ASTA: Yes. That's time.
 14 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you so much.
 15 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 16 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 17 counsel?
 18 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions. Thank
 19 you, Your Honor.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 21 testimony.
 22 MR. DOVE: Judges, just could you
 23 repeat the testifier's name for us please?
 24 JUDGE ASTA: If you could.
 25 THE WITNESS: My name is Brit Steiner.

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1 And anyone who would like to talk about
 2 the science behind this is welcome to come find me
 3 after the hearing is over.
 4 MR. MCDONNELL: Thank you.
 5 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Thank you.
 6 Our next witness is Logan Dostal. On
 7 deck is Brenda Brown.
 8 Please raise your right hand.
 9 WHEREUPON,
 10 LOGAN DOSTAL,
 11 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 12 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 13 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 15 your name for the record.
 16 THE WITNESS: Logan Dostal, L-O-G-A-N
 17 D-O-S-T-A-L.
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 19 address including the township.
 20 THE WITNESS: 13444 Louisville Street
 21 Northeast and that's Paris, Ohio.
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: And do you work or
 23 reside within the project area?
 24 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do.
 25 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the

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1 case?
 2 THE WITNESS: No.
 3 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 4 DIRECT STATEMENT
 5 THE WITNESS: Good evening. I'd like
 6 to start out by just introducing myself. My name is
 7 Logan Dostal and I do live right here in Washington
 8 County. I'm also a member of the International
 9 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Today's topic for
 10 debate is the opposition of proposition for the Stark
 11 Solar project. I would like to voice my support and
 12 focus on five key points.
 13 Renewable energy is all around us.
 14 Eighty percent of the global population lives in a
 15 country that imports oil. That means about 6 billion
 16 people are dependent on fossil fuels from other
 17 countries. Renewable energy effectively makes us less
 18 dependent on these other countries while creating jobs
 19 and providing us with clean, cheap electricity.
 20 Renewable energy is cheaper. Because renewable energy
 21 is all around us, it's cheap to harvest. It's
 22 actually the cheapest way to get energy in most parts
 23 of the world. The cost of electricity generated from
 24 solar cells fell by 85 percent from 2010 to 2020.
 25 The expansion of solar energy means we

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1 could decarbonize 90 percent of our power grid by the
 2 year 2050. Renewable energy is healthier. According
 3 to the World Health Organization, about 99 percent of
 4 the global population breathes air that exceeds health
 5 quality limits. The main cause of this effect is the
 6 burning of fossil fuels. With the expansion of
 7 renewable energy, our carbon footprint will be
 8 decreased, meaning we can breathe healthier air.
 9 Renewable energy creates jobs. Being a
 10 member of an organized labor union, I understand this
 11 is a big project and it would bring a lot of jobs to a
 12 lot of people. In fact, every dollar invested in
 13 renewable energy generates about three times more jobs
 14 than that of the oil field industry. Renewable energy
 15 makes economic sense. This project would generate
 16 about \$57 million of revenue over the next 40 years
 17 for our community and provide us with 150 megawatts of
 18 clean, renewable energy. Marlinton Local Schools
 19 would receive approximately \$35 million of that
 20 revenue. I believe in renewable energy, and I also
 21 believe in the importance of education. This project
 22 would have a major impact on the next generation.
 23 It's for these reasons that I'm in
 24 support of allowing Stark Solar into our community.
 25 And as we ponder our choices, I'd like to remember one

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1 thing, today's decisions shape tomorrow's reality.
 2 Thank you.
 3 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 4 counsel?
 5 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 6 Your Honor. Thank you.
 7 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 8 testimony.
 9 Next is Brenda Brown. On deck is
 10 Kimberly Worley.
 11 Please raise your right hand.
 12 WHEREUPON,
 13 BRENDA BROWN,
 14 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 15 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 16 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 18 your name for the record.
 19 THE WITNESS: Brenda Brown,
 20 B-R-E-N-D-A, Brown, B-R-O-W-N.
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 22 address including the township.
 23 THE WITNESS: 7450 Hahn Street,
 24 Louisville, Ohio 44641 in Nimishillen Township.
 25 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside

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1 within the project area?
 2 THE WITNESS: No.
 3 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 4 case?
 5 THE WITNESS: No.
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you. Please go
 7 ahead.
 8 DIRECT STATEMENT
 9 THE WITNESS: I really didn't prepare a
 10 speech, but I hear all these union people coming up
 11 and I'm a owner of a union company. And basically all
 12 the trades are busy. Right now, you can't find
 13 workers. So everybody crying how much work it's going
 14 to bring to the community, we have a lot of work in
 15 this community. And for solar, according to the
 16 Farmer's Almanac, we're in the top ten cloudiest
 17 states, so why would we even be researching this? As
 18 for the aesthetics that the farmers don't think
 19 they're responsible for their neighbors, you know, why
 20 do we have zoning? Every community has zoning. Every
 21 township has zoning. You know, why is the large solar
 22 an exception, you know, to all the zoning regulations?
 23 You know, we live in these communities because that's
 24 where we wanted to reside with a certain type of
 25 environment and for somebody to be able to just change

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1 that without thinking they don't have to care about
 2 their fellow neighbor, I think that's very selfish.
 3 We're all here for one reason. We're
 4 here to either show our support or show our
 5 opposition. And with all these little fans going, I
 6 think it's overwhelming that the majority of our
 7 people here are in opposition of the large-scale
 8 solar. I hope the board will take this in
 9 consideration because that's what we're here for, is
 10 to show our support. And it's usually either money,
 11 everybody that -- it seems that, well, not everybody,
 12 but a lot of the people that are in support, it's all
 13 about the dollar, not about the community. Thank you.
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 15 counsel?
 16 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions. Thank
 17 you.
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 19 testimony.
 20 Kimberly Worley. On deck, I cannot
 21 read your name. I think it might be Daniel something,
 22 but it's 10543 Georgetown Street, Louisville, Ohio.
 23 Please raise your right hand.
 24 //
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 KIMBERLY WORLEY,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: Kimberly Worley,
 9 K-I-M-B-E-R-L-Y Worley, W-O-R-L-E-Y.
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 11 address including the township.
 12 THE WITNESS: 5570 Oakhill Avenue
 13 Northeast, Louisville.
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: And township, if you
 15 know.
 16 THE WITNESS: Washington.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 18 within the project area?
 19 THE WITNESS: I reside.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: And are you a party to
 21 the case?
 22 THE WITNESS: No.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 24 DIRECT STATEMENT
 25 THE WITNESS: I am here to oppose the

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1 proposed industrial solar project in Washington
 2 Township. I'm very concerned about the Washington
 3 town -- I'm a very concerned Washington Township
 4 resident and also a neighbor to the proposed
 5 industrial solar site. I would like to share a little
 6 bit about where I live, my grown children, and the
 7 neighbors next door.
 8 I'm worried about the environmental
 9 impacts that this industrial solar complex and, for
 10 the record, a possible application for proposed
 11 substation in the future. Our backwoods and yards are
 12 full of wildlife. I feel very blessed to have so many
 13 creatures to enjoy after a grinding day of work. The
 14 construction and the operation and the noise of a
 15 large-scale solar and substation facility would be
 16 detrimental to our wildlife and my peace of mind.
 17 My neighbors, who lives at 5590
 18 Oakhill, are private folks and could not be here
 19 tonight. They use their backwoods for family camping
 20 and summer holiday gatherings. So it may just look
 21 like vacant land on a map, but they would very much
 22 like you to know that it's inhabited by wildlife and
 23 enjoyed by them. This area of forest is very much a
 24 refuge to wildlife, birds, bats, between the open
 25 agricultural lands. The area would become hazardous.

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1 It would have light pollution all night forever from a
 2 substation plus solar fields in extreme close
 3 proximity for humans and wildlife.
 4 Furthermore, I'm worried about every
 5 street I travel on every day would have solar
 6 construction on them. Road safety and solar glare.
 7 I'm concerned that with every turn in
 8 my neighborhood, my scenic view would be gone. My
 9 grown children have purchased homes in Washington
 10 Township. They are vested and tax paying citizens in
 11 the community. My family's home values will be
 12 impacted. I live at 5570 Oakhill between Salem Church
 13 and Cenfield. My daughter's home is on Cenfield, my
 14 son's on 153. Each of us drive Oakhill, Cenfield,
 15 Salem Church, Hartzell, and Beechwood. All of us are
 16 within the proposed area. Our roads are well
 17 maintained by Washington Township and I'd hate to see
 18 them destroyed.
 19 I urge you to please reject Samsung's
 20 project and protect the resident's agricultural land,
 21 wetlands, wildlife, and water. Thank you.
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 23 counsel?
 24 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 25 Your Honor. Thank you.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 2 testimony.
 3 THE WITNESS: Can I turn this in? It's
 4 signed by the residents and the neighbors.
 5 JUDGE SANDOR: Yes, go ahead and put it
 6 on the dais.
 7 Our next witness, I believe, you know
 8 who you are.
 9 MR. THOMAS: Sorry, didn't have my
 10 glasses.
 11 JUDGE SANDOR: Please raise your right
 12 hand.
 13 WHEREUPON,
 14 DAVID THOMAS,
 15 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 16 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 17 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 19 your name for the record.
 20 THE WITNESS: David Thomas, D-A-V-I-D
 21 T-H-O-M-A-S, 10543 Georgetown Street, Lewisville,
 22 Ohio, Nimishillen Township.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 24 within the project area?
 25 THE WITNESS: I do not.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 2 case?
 3 THE WITNESS: I am not.
 4 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 5 THE WITNESS: All right.
 6 DIRECT STATEMENT
 7 THE WITNESS: I support Starks Solar.
 8 I can't help but say if we'd had this seven years ago,
 9 this auditorium would probably be 68 as opposed to the
 10 balmy temperature than it is today. The school
 11 district needs money, guys, it needs it. We need
 12 electricity. I work in the automotive business.
 13 People don't realize 50 percent of all manufacturers'
 14 vehicles have to average 50 miles per gallon in the
 15 next three to five years. That means more EVs and
 16 more hybrids. They're all going to use lots of
 17 electricity. Where is it going to come from? We need
 18 solar. Thank you.
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 20 counsel?
 21 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 22 Your Honor.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: All right. Thank you
 24 for your testimony.
 25 Our next witness is Stacy Armstrong and

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1 on deck is Tim Baltzly.
 2 Please raise your right hand.
 3 WHEREUPON,
 4 STACY ARMSTRONG,
 5 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 6 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 7 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 8 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 9 your name for the record.
 10 THE WITNESS: Stacy Armstrong,
 11 A-R-M-S-T-R-O-N-G, first name Stacy, S-T-A-C-Y.
 12 Address, 10524 Hoover Avenue, Uniontown, Ohio.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Township?
 14 THE WITNESS: It's considered Lake
 15 Township.
 16 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 17 within the project area?
 18 THE WITNESS: Work.
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 20 case?
 21 THE WITNESS: No.
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 23 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 24 DIRECT STATEMENT
 25 THE WITNESS: I'm here in front of you

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1 today to ask you to reject Stark Solar. The reason I
 2 asked you to reject the Stark Solar is because they
 3 are here in a -- a wolf in sheep's clothing. They
 4 come under the alias of "Stark Solar" to seem like
 5 they are local, but they truly are not. The energy
 6 that will be generated from this facility is not our
 7 energy. If you look around this auditorium right now,
 8 this is a true representative of our township, our
 9 community. We are small, but we are strong. Our
 10 community comes together in need. My grandfather and
 11 Gene Dickerhoof [ph], God rest his soul, used to help
 12 each other. When the snow came down, I remember in
 13 the 80s, it was as tall as I was at 12 years old. And
 14 they would go out and they would drive and they would
 15 push the snow for all of the local residents. That is
 16 what our community is about.
 17 This event has divided our community
 18 and made us to the point where we are not looking at
 19 what we have as a community, we're looking at what we
 20 can gain. The organizations that came in to speak
 21 their piece about the solar project is for their own
 22 personal game, it is not for the community. It is for
 23 their name in limelight, to get their union or their
 24 name on a billboard. It is not for our community.
 25 They will come and they will go. We will still be

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1 here fighting this fight.
 2 We will continue to fight this fight
 3 and we will continue to farm. Our farms are strong,
 4 our farms bring in crop. Our farms bringing crop not
 5 only to feed our people, but they also feed our beef
 6 cattle, our dairy cattle, our chicken, our sheep, our
 7 goat, our lambs, as well as raising our own produce.
 8 This land is important to us. We are four generations
 9 strong and we are on the cusp of this development. I
 10 not only ask you, I plead to keep our land safe. We
 11 are farmers and we are farmer strong and we will
 12 continue to farm strong. Thank you.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions from
 14 counsel?
 15 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions. Thank
 16 you.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you very much for
 18 your testimony.
 19 Okay. Our next witness is Tim Baltzly.
 20 Please raise your right hand. Thank
 21 you. Please state and spell your name for the record.
 22 MR. BALTZLY: Tim Baltzly, it's T-I-M
 23 B-A-L-T-Z-L-Y.
 24 JUDGE SANDOR: Please provide your
 25 address including the township.

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1 MR. BALTZLY: 15044 Louisville Street
 2 Northeast, Minerva, Ohio, and we're in Washington.
 3 JUDGE SANDOR: Do you work or reside
 4 within the project area?
 5 MR. BALTZLY: I live there.
 6 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you a party to the
 7 case?
 8 MR. BALTZLY: No.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 10 DIRECT STATEMENT
 11 MR. BALTZLY: My wife and I recently
 12 moved here from Jackson Township. We like the
 13 serenity, wanted a better lifestyle for our family,
 14 being a healthier lifestyle. We lived under the
 15 shadow of Akron-Canton Airport, you know, probably all
 16 kinds of pollution coming in from jets. It's very,
 17 you know, by the time I get out of a stressful day at
 18 the insurance office, I'm relaxed. All the beauty and
 19 corn and everything. But you know that's not really
 20 what this is about. I'm not here because I hate
 21 solar. I have solar panels on my barn. I think it's
 22 a good idea. I'm a little bit agitated I pay 200 a
 23 month and I still have an electric bill, but I'm not
 24 here to whine about that.
 25 What I have a problem with is that

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1 we're using good farmland to put solar when, I mean,
 2 you know, we can say, "Well, you know, there's no grid
 3 there and all that," that's a crap idea. Because we
 4 probably have bunches of steel mills in Canton, like,
 5 a old Ford plant, let's see, Republic just went down.
 6 I bet you there's plenty of grid right there and
 7 there's probably plenty of acreage there that we could
 8 put solar that nobody's going to miss a meal because
 9 we put it there.

10 Or how about maybe we decide that we
 11 could put it, like, in between the Highway 77 or
 12 whatever because we could probably power all of Ohio
 13 if we use that area. Or maybe we could, anytime we
 14 build a school, we just put, you know -- how many new
 15 schools up in Stark County -- maybe we should have
 16 thought, "Hey, we should put solar on these roofs."
 17 But it seems like there's more to the story than just
 18 using our farmland and that's why I'm against the
 19 project. I think we need to use, you know, strip
 20 mines or whatever else, available land that's -- has
 21 no purpose. Thank you.

22 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.
 23 Any questions from counsel?
 24 MR. MCDONNELL: No, thank you.
 25 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your

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1 testimony.
 2 Okay. The next the last remaining
 3 witnesses I believe are all intervenors in this case.
 4 Before we get to them, is there anyone else who did
 5 not sign up that would like to testify before we keep
 6 going?
 7 Sir in the back, please come up.
 8 Please raise your right hand.
 9 WHEREUPON,
 10 ANTHONY MILANO,
 11 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 12 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 13 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 15 your name for the record.
 16 THE WITNESS: Anthony Milano,
 17 A-N-T-H-O-N-Y --
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: Oh, you're an
 19 intervenor? Is that correct?
 20 THE WITNESS: Yes, it is. Oh, when I
 21 heard that, I thought that was the start of --
 22 JUDGE SANDOR: One moment we
 23 actually -- oh, yeah. No, we actually have you
 24 registered a little bit later on. You know, I --
 25 THE WITNESS: Okay. Well, yeah I

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1 will just -- yeah. All right.
 2 JUDGE SANDOR: Yeah, you're okay,
 3 you're okay. Go ahead and take a seat. We got a few
 4 more witnesses for you before you then and --
 5 THE WITNESS: Got you. Well, I was
 6 busy.
 7 JUDGE SANDOR: You're good. You're
 8 good.
 9 JUDGE ASTA: We just wanted to make
 10 sure that anyone who's not an intervenor has an
 11 opportunity before we allow the intervenors to speak.
 12 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Last chance for
 13 any non-intervenors.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: In the back corner?
 15 JUDGE SANDOR: Not during the session,
 16 but after.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: You can submit your
 18 documents up here.
 19 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. So I'm not seeing
 20 anybody that's -- oh, okay, please come up.
 21 THE REPORTER: Just come and put it up
 22 here on the stage, sir.
 23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: I'm new to all
 24 this.
 25 THE REPORTER: No, you're all good.

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1 You're all good, man.
 2 JUDGE SANDOR: Are you -- sorry. You
 3 tripped me up.
 4 MS. JOHNSON-KELLER: I do, I do.
 5 WHEREUPON,
 6 DIANE JOHNSON-KELLER,
 7 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 8 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 9 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 10 JUDGE SANDOR: Please state and spell
 11 your name for the record.
 12 THE WITNESS: Diane Johnson-Keller.
 13 3794 Fox Avenue Northeast, Minerva, Ohio 44657.
 14 JUDGE SANDOR: And can you spell your
 15 name as well, please?
 16 THE WITNESS: D-I-A-N-E J-O-H-N-S-O-N
 17 K-E-L-L-E-R.
 18 JUDGE SANDOR: And township?
 19 THE WITNESS: Washington.
 20 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. And do you work
 21 or reside within the project area?
 22 THE WITNESS: Yes, reside.
 23 JUDGE SANDOR: And are you a party to
 24 the case?
 25 THE WITNESS: No.

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1 JUDGE SANDOR: Please go ahead.
 2 DIRECT STATEMENT
 3 THE WITNESS: I have lived here about
 4 20 years. I have met so many people that are involved
 5 with this now and so much of what I'm
 6 hearing -- anyone who's been against this almost has
 7 entirely been no one local. They are not from
 8 Washington Township. They have no loyalties here,
 9 they have no interests here. It has not been brought
 10 up that the Stark County itself, when this first came
 11 up and the commissioners decided not to support it,
 12 that all but three townships decided to ban the solar
 13 farms from their properties. And I think that's very
 14 important to show, you know, how Stark County, not
 15 just Washington Township, but Stark County stands for
 16 this situation.
 17 Also, it was in the newspaper, there's
 18 all kinds of new research coming out on solar as far
 19 as new ways to do it that sound -- that maybe someday
 20 it will be something that we would be interested in at
 21 some point in time because they're talking about
 22 adding the agriculture but not now. They said only 11
 23 people would highly be involved. After the initial
 24 construction, only approximately 11 people would be
 25 involved in any kind of upkeep and I'm sure they're

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1 not going to be high-end people that will be making a
 2 lot of money and paying a lot of taxes.
 3 So I just wanted to bring these things
 4 up as far as the county itself has decided not to
 5 bring them in. And if they want to go to one of the
 6 three townships that did not vote to not have them in
 7 their townships, that they should go there. That
 8 would be great. Thank you.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you.
 10 Any questions from counsel?
 11 MR. MCDONNELL: No, Your Honor. Thank
 12 you.
 13 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 14 testimony.
 15 Anyone else before we get to the
 16 intervenors? Okay. Seeing none. I just have a few
 17 notes before any intervenor does testify. I'd like to
 18 note that your counsel is not present this evening.
 19 If you do testify, you'll be subject to
 20 cross-examination without your counsel present if
 21 counsel has questions. In the alternative of
 22 testifying tonight, you may do so at the
 23 September 17th evidentiary hearing with your counsel
 24 present.
 25 With those notes out of the way and

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1 assuming you all would still like to testify, we'll go
 2 ahead and proceed. And I'll hand over the mic to
 3 Judge Asta.
 4 JUDGE ASTA: And first we have Cindy
 5 Wasik. Oh, Wasik.
 6 My apologies. Please raise your right
 7 hand.
 8 WHEREUPON,
 9 CINDY WASIK,
 10 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 11 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 12 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 13 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 14 your name for the record.
 15 THE WITNESS: My name is Cindy Wasick,
 16 C-I-N-D-Y W-A-S-I-K. I live at 11941 Louisville
 17 Street, Louisville, Ohio 44641 and I reside in the
 18 project area. And I am not a party to the case.
 19 JUDGE ASTA: So as an intervenor, you
 20 are a party to this case.
 21 THE WITNESS: Oh, okay.
 22 JUDGE ASTA: But just to clarify, you
 23 understand that by testifying you're doing so without
 24 your counsel present?
 25 THE WITNESS: Right.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. All right. You may
 2 proceed.
 3 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 4 DIRECT STATEMENT
 5 THE WITNESS: My concern with
 6 large-scale solar is based on what I've read and what
 7 I've heard about the safety, health, and well-being of
 8 myself, my family, and the community surrounding the
 9 solar development. My concern is that the panels, the
 10 inverters, and the battery station are not
 11 environmentally friendly. Also, the farming jobs that
 12 will be lost as a result of displacing farmland
 13 include direct, indirect, and induced jobs that
 14 include, but not are limited to equipment operation,
 15 equipment sales, seed sales, fertilizer sales, fuel
 16 sales, and trucking. These are all lost jobs. Please
 17 deny this case. Thank you.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you very much.
 19 Any questions for her?
 20 MR. MCDONNELL: No question.
 21 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 22 Next is Tony Scott and on deck is
 23 Devon Hoopes.
 24 Please raise your right hand.
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 TONY SCOTT,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 7 your name for the record.
 8 THE WITNESS: Tony Scott, T-O-N-Y
 9 S-C-O-T-T.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 11 as township, please.
 12 THE WITNESS: 4706 Hartzell Avenue
 13 Northeast, Paris, Ohio 44669. Washington Township.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. And do you reside
 15 or work within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: Reside.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: All right. You may
 18 proceed.
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 20 DIRECT STATEMENT
 21 THE WITNESS: Good evening. I'm here
 22 tonight to share with you my opposition of the
 23 large-scale industrial solar complex currently being
 24 considered to be located in Washington Township, Stark
 25 County, Ohio. I believe the key question needs to be

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1 addressed, that being, how do most people and other
 2 townships across Stark County respond to the idea of a
 3 large-scale solar complex being built where they live?
 4 Maybe the following information will help answer the
 5 question. A total of 14 out of 17 townships by
 6 majority vote of local entities, township trustees,
 7 along with the county commissioners oppose the concept
 8 of large-scale solar. The three remaining townships
 9 in the county with the passage of Senate Bill 52 have
 10 their say by a vote of their local trustees. This is
 11 a common practice in a representative republic.
 12 Washington Township does not have this privilege due
 13 to the paperwork that was submitted just prior to the
 14 new law taking place.
 15 With that being brought to the
 16 forefront, Washington Township stands alone due to a
 17 timeline taking away the community's voice. I
 18 mentioned before Washington Township trustees were one
 19 of 14 townships that opposed large-scale solar. The
 20 county commissioners, another example of a
 21 representative republic, supported the trustees with a
 22 unanimous vote of opposition. I believe the
 23 foreign-based solar companies and a few lessors knew
 24 very well that there would be strong opposition and
 25 pushback from the local residents. With that being

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1 said, the community of Washington Township has the
 2 same objection to the large-scale solar as the vast
 3 majority of the population in Stark County. There is
 4 a reason why Senate Bill 52 was enacted. Does
 5 government of the people, by the people, and for the
 6 people ring a bell?
 7 Also, another concept to understand is
 8 that over 50 percent of the lessors do not live in
 9 Washington Township. These folks can be considered
 10 absentee land owners. I equate this situation is it's
 11 okay to put these large-scale solar complex in
 12 somebody else's neighborhood all the while having no
 13 concern for the other landowners having to deal with
 14 the fallout that will take place as a solar company
 15 takes over our countryside.
 16 Another issue to be considered is the
 17 federal government's subsidies and providing grants
 18 for financial gain to a foreign country. U.S. tax
 19 dollars to be provided to an overseas business paid
 20 directly or indirectly lacks a common-sense approach.
 21 In closing, I pose the question to the
 22 Ohio Power Siting Board, would an industrial facility
 23 involving a large-scale project in Washington Township
 24 serve the public interest, convenience, or necessity?
 25 I think not. As a citizen of Stark County, I oppose

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1 the development as well as financing of a large-scale
 2 solar project in Washington, D.C. -- Washington
 3 Township, excuse me. Thank you, Your Honor, for the
 4 time.
 5 JUDGE SANDOR: Okay. Any questions
 6 from counsel?
 7 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions. Thank
 8 you, Your Honor.
 9 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 10 testimony this evening.
 11 JUDGE ASTA: Our next witness is Devon
 12 Hoopes and on deck is Andrew DiLiddo. If I got that
 13 wrong, I apologize.
 14 Please raise your right.
 15 WHEREUPON,
 16 DEVON HOOPES,
 17 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 18 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 19 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 20 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 21 your name for the record.
 22 THE WITNESS: Devon Hoopes, D-E-V-O-N
 23 H-O-O-P-E-S.
 24 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 25 as township?

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1 THE WITNESS: 13267 Cenfield Street
 2 Northeast, Alliance.
 3 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work in
 4 the project area?
 5 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And you're an intervenor
 7 in this case?
 8 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 9 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 10 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 11 DIRECT STATEMENT
 12 THE WITNESS: My husband and I own 38
 13 acres adjacent to the proposed solar industrial
 14 complex. There are numerous reasons I and others
 15 oppose this large-scale project, but I will highlight
 16 just three of them this evening.
 17 One of my biggest concerns is
 18 contamination of soil and water. On our 38 acres, we
 19 have a pond that is approximately 2 1/2 acres and two
 20 streams that provide runoff from adjacent farm where
 21 the solar panels will be placed. We are concerned for
 22 our pond's ecosystem and like many others in the area,
 23 we are also concerned about our well water. Our pond
 24 and streams run right into Beech Creek. In May of
 25 2023, the EPA started their own initiative, entitled

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1 RE-Powering America's Land, which encourages renewable
 2 energy development on current or formerly contaminated
 3 lands, landfills, and mine sites. Why aren't these
 4 alternatives being explored? The fact is, Washington
 5 Township was an easy target because of the overhead
 6 power line and open farmland. It was not because this
 7 is in our community's best interest.
 8 My second concern is the noise made by
 9 inverters, transformers, and motors on the solar
 10 complex. From my property, I can hear the trains out
 11 on Park Avenue and through Maximo and this railroad's
 12 over a mile and a half away. I can also hear the
 13 bells ringing at Salem Community Church on Beechwood
 14 Avenue, which is over a mile away. And finally, for
 15 our safety, I can hear Alliance's emergency alert
 16 sirens that test every Saturday at noon and those
 17 sirens are 2.8 and over 3 1/2 miles away. My point
 18 is, if I can hear different sounds that are 3 1/2
 19 miles away or less from my home, I'm very concerned
 20 that I will hear residual noise from the solar field
 21 that would be right up against my property.
 22 My final concern I want to bring to
 23 your attention today is road traffic and safety.
 24 Anyone who's ever traveled our local streets, such as
 25 Cenfield, Hartzell, and Salem Church knows how narrow

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1 they are. If you pass a large vehicle, you must slow
 2 down and be cautious while passing. There are over
 3 100 homes on the streets located around these solar
 4 fields. It is not safe to create even more traffic
 5 and place even larger vehicles on our local roads.
 6 I appreciate all members taking the
 7 time to come to our community and see first-hand how a
 8 large solar project will negatively impact our
 9 township. I respectfully ask that this project be
 10 denied. It fails to meet the criteria of public
 11 interest, convenience, and necessity. Thank you.
 12 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 13 Any questions for this witness?
 14 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 15 Your Honor. Thank you.
 16 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you for your
 17 testimony.
 18 Andrew DiLiddo. And on deck is Erik
 19 Hann.
 20 Please raise your right hand.
 21 WHEREUPON,
 22 ANDREW DILIDDO,
 23 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 24 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 25 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:

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1 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 2 your name for the record.
 3 THE WITNESS: My first name is Andrew,
 4 A-N-D-R-E-W. My last name is DiLiddo. I compliment
 5 the judge for pronouncing it correctly, you're the
 6 first one I've met in my life to do so. Capital D, I,
 7 capital L, I-D-D-O and it rhymes with Toledo.
 8 JUDGE ASTA: Is it Italian? And your
 9 address is well as township?
 10 THE WITNESS: Sure. It's 3133
 11 Cloverhurst, it's all one word, it's clover like the
 12 plant and then Hurst Street Northeast, that's Canton,
 13 44721.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: I don't reside, but I
 17 work in Paris, Ohio.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. And are you an
 19 intervenor in this case?
 20 THE WITNESS: Actually, Judge, I think
 21 there's been an irregularity here. When I approached
 22 the sign-up table, I said I wanted to testify and they
 23 said, "Well, if you want to testify, you have to sign
 24 an intervenor sheet." And they also told me that if I
 25 signed an intervenor sheet, I would have to go to

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1 Columbus in two weeks. It would be required. And I
 2 said: "I just returned today from Columbus. I don't
 3 think I can go to Columbus in two weeks." So I feel
 4 that there was some kind of irregularity when I signed
 5 at the table.

6 JUDGE ASTA: There could have been a
 7 miscommunication or something, but just so I'm clear,
 8 you're not an intervenor in this case?

9 THE WITNESS: Okay. I'm not.

10 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. Well, with that
 11 said, you may proceed with your testimony.

12 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

13 DIRECT STATEMENT

14 THE WITNESS: I'm also a Roman Catholic
 15 and I'm a member of Pope Francis's Laudato Si Action
 16 Plan, which is an international climate action plan
 17 which I am helping to implement here in the Youngstown
 18 Diocese of Ohio throughout the parishes. I've been a
 19 member of the Alliance, Ohio, parishes when I lived
 20 there and I work through many other parishes
 21 throughout. We meet monthly with the Vatican and on
 22 every month's meeting, I join people from all over the
 23 world who discuss issues they're facing with climate
 24 change. Over the last couple of years, I had to
 25 discuss with our international group the wild fire

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1 smoke that was coming down here from Canada and the
 2 health problems it, you know, caused for people who
 3 were just going out for a jog or for kids that had
 4 asthma. So we do have climate problems here.

5 Beyond that, this morning I was married
 6 46 years ago down the road here in Marlboro. My wife
 7 grew up on a farm in Marlboro Township. Forty-six
 8 years ago, I started working on that farm with my
 9 wife, her brothers, and my in-laws. I currently live
 10 on a pig farm and I live next to a dairy farm that has
 11 a windmill. So even though I live in the city, I know
 12 a little bit about farms and I subscribe to
 13 community-supported agriculture in Washington Township
 14 and Columbiana County.

15 This morning I had a responsibility as
 16 a husband to drive my wife to Aultman Hospital for
 17 surgery. We drove at 4:30 a.m. on I-77 past the Hall
 18 of Fame. The hall of fame was completely lit up at
 19 4:30 in the morning and I ask everybody in this
 20 audience to go to the hall of fame tomorrow at 4:30
 21 a.m. and then ask yourself who is paying for that
 22 electricity and where does it come from? I have
 23 friends in Paris, Ohio come up to me and said,
 24 "Andrew, my AEP, American Electric Power, bill was
 25 \$200.00, now it's \$500." I have neighbors knocking on

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1 my door because I have solar panels. I haven't paid
 2 an electric bill for over two years. I get a bill
 3 every month from AEP and it is zero. So the ladies
 4 that says it is too cloudy in Ohio, you are wrong.
 5 Solar works.

6 Now, the people that attack Samsung,
 7 you people have Samsung components in your cell phones
 8 and your TVs, so give me a break. And these wooden
 9 telephone poles you have out here in the sticks in
 10 Canton, we have these giant monster metal towers for
 11 the purpose of holding heavy cables to bring power
 12 into the Hall of Fame. We have substations that are
 13 new. Why? We needed two new elementary schools and
 14 we had a new Meijer grocery store, so we needed a new
 15 substation. That substation's on the Nimishillen
 16 Creek where I live.

17 JUDGE SANDOR: Sir, that's that's time.
 18 Thank you, though.

19 Any questions from counsel?

20 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 21 Your Honor. Thank you.

22 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 23 testimony.

24 JUDGE ASTA: And next is Erik Hann and
 25 on deck is Mark Thomas.

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1 Please raise your right hand.
 2 WHEREUPON,
 3 ERIK HANN,
 4 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 5 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 6 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 7 JUDGE ASTA: And please state your name
 8 and spell it for the record.

9 THE WITNESS: My name is Erik Hann,
 10 E-R-I-K H-A-N-N.

11 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 12 as township?

13 THE WITNESS: Address is 1805
 14 Sturbridge Drive, Louisville, Ohio, Nimishillen
 15 Township.

16 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 17 within the project area?

18 THE WITNESS: No.

19 JUDGE ASTA: And are you an intervenor
 20 in this case?

21 THE WITNESS: Yes.

22 JUDGE ASTA: Please continue.

23 DIRECT STATEMENT

24 THE WITNESS: Well, good evening.
 25 Again, my name is Erik Hann and I am a

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1 third-generation IBEW electrician. And I am currently
 2 the business manager for Local 540. I grew up right
 3 next door in Louisville. I've lived in Stark County
 4 my whole life and I care a lot about what happens
 5 here. My members and I work hard to keep our local
 6 economy thriving because this is our home. As a kid
 7 in Louisville, I was a farmhand. I worked on a dairy
 8 farm, feeding and milking cows, and working in the
 9 ground in the summer. I remember the hard work that
 10 farming can be and I still use the lessons that I
 11 learned on that farm to this day, including core
 12 values like hard work, respect, integrity, and the
 13 importance of putting others before yourself. And I
 14 lean on those values when it comes to making tough
 15 decisions.

16 When I first heard about the Stark
 17 Solar project, I was a little conflicted. You know, I
 18 tried to consider this project as the business manager
 19 of Local 540, as the members and families in Stark
 20 County. But I also view this project through a
 21 broader lens, including my experience as a farmhand,
 22 and we've heard a lot of the same thoughts that I had
 23 that went back and forth in my mind as I considered
 24 which position I would take. I am sympathetic to both
 25 sides here because I've been there and ultimately both

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1 sides want the same thing; right? You know, we all
 2 want what is best for our family, for our community,
 3 and for our country.

4 But when I viewed this project through
 5 a broad lens that considered my members, my community,
 6 and my state and the overwhelming number of benefits
 7 that this project will bring, it became clear that
 8 Stark Solar serves the public interest. Over
 9 \$57 million to our community serves the public
 10 interest. Over 200 local union jobs with benefits and
 11 retirement and healthcare and the best training in the
 12 world serves the public interest. The strength and
 13 resiliency that the Stark Solar project will bring to
 14 our overloaded, overpriced electric grid that we all
 15 need in and around Washington Township, across Stark
 16 County, and the state of Ohio, and the entire PJM
 17 region will serve the public interest. It's all
 18 positives for our families, our communities, and our
 19 country.

20 While I was a little conflicted when I
 21 first heard about the project, I did my research. I
 22 visited a fully-operational solar farm in Ohio. I
 23 studied the application and it became an easy decision
 24 to make. It's easy to see that the project serves the
 25 public interest, convenience, and necessity. So I

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1 urge the board to see this opportunity that the
 2 project represents for Stark County and have the
 3 courage to do what is right. On behalf of the
 4 thousands of building trades members and our families,
 5 we urge the board to approve the Stark Solar project.
 6 Thank you.

7 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

8 Any question for this witness? Any
 9 questions?

10 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions.

11 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.

12 Next is Mark Thomas and then on deck is
 13 Anthony Milano.

14 Please raise your right hand.

15 WHEREUPON,
 16 MARK THOMAS,
 17 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 18 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 19 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 20 JUDGE ASTA: And please state and spell
 21 your name for the record.

22 THE WITNESS: Yeah. Mark, M-A-R-K,
 23 Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-S. Address is 10881 Georgetown
 24 Street Northeast, Louisville, Ohio, Nimishillen
 25 Township.

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1 JUDGE ASTA: And do you live or work in
 2 the project area?

3 THE WITNESS: I work. I am a landowner
 4 in the project.

5 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. And are you an
 6 intervenor in this case?

7 THE WITNESS: If you say so. I don't
 8 know what that is. I figure I'm an intervenor because
 9 I own property there.

10 JUDGE ASTA: So our intervenors are the
 11 Solar Stark Free group or Stark Solar Free.

12 JUDGE SANDOR: Sorry to interrupt. I
 13 don't believe I saw you on the individual intervenor
 14 list on the online docket, so I'm not sure you are an
 15 intervenor, but you're still welcome to provide your
 16 testimony.

17 JUDGE ASTA: Yes, yeah.

18 THE WITNESS: I'll be whatever you want
 19 me to be. Yeah, I'll be whatever you want me to be.
 20 But anyhow, I got a different twist on this.

21 JUDGE ASTA: Yes, you may. Yeah.

22 THE WITNESS: Go ahead?

23 JUDGE ASTA: Go ahead, yes.

24 DIRECT STATEMENT

25 THE WITNESS: Okay. I got a different

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1 twist on this. I heard stories from my grandpa and my
 2 dad about men clearing our 300 acres that are in this
 3 project with horses and also with heavy equipment. So
 4 this farm and this land is very dear to me. Many of
 5 these people are, were, might still be my friends.
 6 When I was approached by Samsung, at first I wasn't
 7 sure. After looking at projects and delving into this
 8 and realizing that when you put heavy cover crops
 9 down, when you give the ground a break for 20, 30, 40
 10 years, can actually be better ground than the ground
 11 that we turn over every day, turn to put fertilizer
 12 on, put chemicals on, and grow crops on. So I don't
 13 believe we are destroying the ground or the
 14 neighborhood in any way.
 15 I also do have a different way to look
 16 at this. I'm 65, we form 1,800 acres, 900 we own, 900
 17 we rent. Of that 900 acres, it's all owned by people
 18 that are 70 to 91 years old at a minimum of \$10,000
 19 per acre. Every 100 acres is a million dollars that
 20 one of us has to pull out of our pockets to farm it.
 21 Now, if we don't buy it for farm ground -- and there's
 22 only so many farmers left, I mean, we're dying breeds.
 23 I plan on working two weeks after I die. I'm not
 24 retiring. So I want to be able to take the money from
 25 this and buy another 500 acres. If we don't and we

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1 can all say we want that ground, we all rent ground
 2 from people. If we don't buy it, it goes to houses.
 3 We can't afford to lose more ground. This ground does
 4 not go away, it can be farm ground and also I want to
 5 add at least another 500 acres to our ground.
 6 And that's all I got to say about it.
 7 And thank you for your time. You guys really wanted
 8 to come up here, miss your families, and sit in here
 9 where it's a balmy 98 degrees. Thank you.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 11 Any questions for this witness?
 12 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 13 Your Honor. Thank you.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: Okay. Thank you.
 15 And Anthony Milano?
 16 JUDGE SANDOR: And this is our last
 17 registered witness.
 18 JUDGE ASTA: Yes. Thank you.
 19 Hello again.
 20 MR. MILANO: Yeah, ain't that right?
 21 JUDGE ASTA: Please raise your right
 22 hand.
 23 //
 24 //
 25 //

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1 WHEREUPON,
 2 ANTHONY MILANO,
 3 called as a witness and having been first duly sworn
 4 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
 5 the truth, was examined and testified as follows:
 6 JUDGE ASTA: And can you state and
 7 spell your name for the record, please?
 8 THE WITNESS: Anthony Milano,
 9 A-N-T-H-O-N-Y M-I-L-A-N-O.
 10 JUDGE ASTA: And your address as well
 11 as township?
 12 THE WITNESS: 13323 Louisville Street,
 13 Paris, Ohio, Washington Township.
 14 JUDGE ASTA: And do you reside or work
 15 within the project area?
 16 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 17 JUDGE ASTA: And you are an intervenor
 18 to this case?
 19 THE WITNESS: Correct.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: You may proceed.
 21 THE WITNESS: Okay.
 22 DIRECT STATEMENT
 23 THE WITNESS: Okay. Tony Scott pretty
 24 much said a lot of what I was going to say, but we do
 25 have the support of the local township trustees, the

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1 majority of them or the 14 out of 17. Also, we have
 2 support of our county commissioners in Stark County.
 3 A couple things I have a little
 4 question about is one is the amount of panels out
 5 there that are going to be on the surface of the
 6 earth, if you will, will actually be considered
 7 similar to almost like a parking lot. And so there's
 8 what's stated to be is called the heat island effect.
 9 It's usually reserved for cities and those cities that
 10 reflect and put heat back into the atmosphere, that's
 11 exactly what will happen with these panels. And it's
 12 been stated to be as much as seven degrees. So as any
 13 farmer would know, there's a chance of drying up
 14 surface water and/or affecting the ecosystem along
 15 with possibly, you know, hindering the crops because
 16 we know what they look like when there's no rain or
 17 water is taken away.
 18 And so with that, I'd like to also
 19 challenge the point of distance. Distance by the
 20 people like myself that are up against this project
 21 are within, they claim, 300 feet and they claim that's
 22 a safe point. Okay. But what we got to remember is
 23 if we're at 300 feet, as soon as we step out of our
 24 door, we may be 200, 100. So where does it come into
 25 our best interest to support something like this when

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1 it takes away possibly the just normal, you know,
 2 endeavors we want to create or make on our property
 3 just to enjoy what we have and what we have invested?
 4 So that's an issue there that where does it come into
 5 play? Because when you think about as far as when you
 6 talk, like, distance before homeowners and value,
 7 sure, it's going to be not much of a difference in a
 8 mile or three-tenths as that some other places state,
 9 but it also means it's putting you that closer to
 10 threats of things that could happen and go wrong.
 11 And so along with that, I just want to
 12 add, too, that we've had stated and Tony as well said
 13 that, you know, the power that is actually going to be
 14 generated is not staying here. Okay. So and when you
 15 talk about true sustainable power, I question whether
 16 this is. And so doing the math in terms of Stark
 17 County, if the power went out tomorrow, there's only
 18 enough power generated by the system that it would
 19 supply Stark County 43.2 percent. What do the rest of
 20 us do? Look at Texas and the wind and the storm in
 21 the winter of 2021 that actually shut everything down
 22 because there was all alternative energy trying to
 23 provide the power and it failed. And directly or
 24 indirect, it was over 700 people that perished. So
 25 the point of sustainability is it's got to have sun

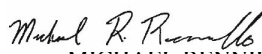
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1 every day. The wind has to have wind every day. When
 2 you don't have either one of those, you don't have
 3 alternate power.
 4 And so that being said, the concept of
 5 putting things in place of health and welfare and the
 6 safety of this community, you know, it directly
 7 affects it on a level that is, like, the old saying
 8 is, we actually live here. This is our investment.
 9 This is where we set up shop to raise our families.
 10 And so in the end, I'd like to say that I believe that
 11 there's a point of what you can do and can't do,
 12 zoning rules will limit that, but no one should have
 13 to bear the brunt or pay the price of the possibility
 14 of someone else's success. Because in the scheme of
 15 all this, most of us have everything to lose but
 16 nothing to gain.
 17 JUDGE SANDOR: Sir, that's the three
 18 minutes.
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 20 JUDGE ASTA: Thank you.
 21 JUDGE SANDOR: Any questions?
 22 MR. MCDONNELL: No questions,
 23 Your Honor.
 24 JUDGE SANDOR: Thank you for your
 25 testimony.

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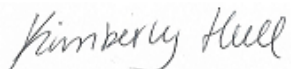
1 That concludes the witnesses who signed
 2 up to testify this evening. Is there anyone present
 3 this evening who would like to testify before we close
 4 out the hearing? Okay. Seeing none. Thank you to
 5 everyone who came tonight and who also participated
 6 this evening. We'd like to thank Marlinton High
 7 School for allowing us to use their facilities in
 8 order to conduct this public hearing in person with
 9 you this evening. Thank you to our ad hoc board
 10 members for attending this evening. The hearing is
 11 now concluded and the hearing transcript will be
 12 submitted on the record for the board's consideration
 13 in this case. Thank you all again and have a nice
 14 evening and cool down.
 15 Going off the record at 8:04 p.m.
 16 (Whereupon, at 8:04 p.m., the
 17 proceeding was concluded.)
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25

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1 CERTIFICATE
 2 I, MICHAEL RENNILLO, the officer before whom
 3 the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby
 4 certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing
 5 proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn;
 6 that the proceedings were recorded by me and
 7 thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified
 8 transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of
 9 said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the
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Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure

Title V. Discovery

Rule 30

(e) Submission to Witness; Changes; Signing.

When the testimony is fully transcribed, the deposition shall be submitted to the witness for examination and shall be read to or by the witness, unless examination and reading are waived by the witness and by the parties. Any changes in form or substance that the witness desires to make shall be entered upon the deposition by the officer with a statement of the reasons given by the witness for making them. The deposition shall then be signed by the witness, unless the parties by stipulation waive the signing or the witness is ill, cannot be found, or refuses to sign. The witness shall have thirty days from submission of the deposition to the witness to review and sign the deposition. If the deposition is taken within thirty days of a trial or hearing, the witness shall have seven days from submission of the deposition to the witness to review and sign the deposition. If the trial or hearing is scheduled to commence less than seven days before the deposition is submitted to the witness, the court may establish a deadline for the

witness to review and sign the deposition. If the deposition is not signed by the witness during the period prescribed in this division, the officer shall sign it and state on the record the fact of the waiver or of the illness or absence of the witness or the fact of the refusal to sign together with the reason, if any, given therefor; and the deposition may then be used as fully as though signed, unless on a motion to suppress the court holds that the reasons given for the refusal to sign require rejection of the deposition in whole or in part.

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VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS

COMPANY CERTIFICATE AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Veritext Legal Solutions represents that the foregoing transcript is a true, correct and complete transcript of the colloquies, questions and answers as submitted by the court reporter. Veritext Legal Solutions further represents that the attached exhibits, if any, are true, correct and complete documents as submitted by the court reporter and/or attorneys in relation to this deposition and that the documents were processed in accordance with our litigation support and production standards.

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