

FILE



OFBF Self-Help Energy Programs

Administered by the Ohio Farm Bureau Development Corporation
280 North High Street, P.O. Box 182383, Columbus, OH 43218-2383
Phone: 614-246-8294 Fax: 614-249-2200
E-Mail: darnold@ofbf.org

May 8, 2012

Mr. Todd Snitchler, Chairman
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

PUCO

RECEIVED-SOCKETING DIV
2012 MAY -8 PM 4:28

RE: In the Matter of the Long-Term Forecast Reports of Ohio Power Company and Columbus Southern Power Company and Related Matters, PUCO Case Numbers 10-501-EL-FOR and 10-502-EL-FOR

Dear Chairman Snitchler:

The Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Turning Point Solar (TPS) initiative, presently before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO or Commission) as part of Cases 10-501-EL-FOR and 10-502-EL-FOR. We understand that the project focuses on the installation of a 50 megawatt, utility-scale photovoltaic generation facility in Noble County, Ohio. Once completed, TPS will be able to deliver power from clean, renewable energy resources that could be purchased by AEP-Ohio under long term power delivery contracts.

On April 27, 2012 the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Utilities Service (USDA-RUS) published its *Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI) in relation to Turning Point Solar's Environmental Assessment (EA). PUCO approval of the project coupled with a favorable EA opens TPS to a variety of potential loans and/or loan guarantees and prompts consideration of potential financing packages.

Moreover, completion of the Turning Point Solar project in southern Ohio provides the following additional benefits:

- **Smart Grid Deployment:** The nation's electric generation, transmission and distribution system is facing substantial change. As an increasing number of large, centralized coal and nuclear generation facilities face decommissioning, more decentralized facilities using renewable technology will be coupled with remaining and/or advanced coal, nuclear and natural gas generation to ensure power delivery. Ohio's legislative and community leaders worked with the state's investor-owned utilities to address this challenge with the creation of Ohio's Advanced Energy Initiative in SB 221.

AEP-Ohio is already assuming a leadership position in smart grid technology. It is our understanding that the company supports the development of renewable generation in part by working with the industry to create effective, long-term power delivery contracts. This support includes projects near Van Wert and Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Moreover, AEP-Ohio spokespersons are sharing smart grid plans with community leaders. As part of smart grid deployment, AEP is advocating the coupling of intermittent generation from renewable facilities with large scale battery back-up systems and similar technologies to make this generation a true base load resource.

Support for TPS could help ensure that AEP-Ohio has the ability to acquire additional, adequate generation supplies from renewables today as a hedge against higher prices when more

This is to certify that the images appearing are an accurate and complete reproduction of a case file document delivered in the regular course of business.
technician AN Date Processed MAY-08 2012

utilities compete to obtain this type of generation as part of their own smart grid deployment strategies.

On March 21, 2012 the Commission approved Cases 11-5568-EL-PUR and 11-5569-EL-PUR. Accordingly, AEP-Ohio is expanding smart grid technology in other areas. The utility is engaged in smart meter deployment and self-healing distribution networks in Columbus, Ohio. Demand Side Management/Energy Efficiency initiatives incorporating lighting, HVAC and appliance purchase programs are expanding throughout their entire system. In the future, savings through an economic hedge on the generation side could be used to balance development costs on the distribution side.

- **Economic Development:** Construction and installation of the project will create over 100 construction jobs. Moreover, close to 85 percent of the goods and services required for the construction of the project will be sourced in Ohio. Isofoton North America will be working to manufacture close to 250,000 solar panels at new facilities located in Napoleon, Ohio. When fully operational, more than 300 permanent manufacturing jobs will be created at this facility.
- **Ecological Benefits:** Southeast Ohio has large areas of land that has been strip mined. TPS developers and AEP should be recognized for their efforts in creating a project that utilizes 700 acres of reclaimed land. Experience gained with this project could lead to employing other tracts of marginal land in Appalachian Ohio for similar projects. Moreover, strategically placing these new facilities within a transmission grid that currently brings coal fired generation to consumer markets, southeastern Ohio could become a leader in additional forms of power generation.

OFBF is a member organization whose mission is to forge partnerships between producers and consumers. Next to labor, energy is the largest single cost input in many farm and small business operations. Consumers living in rural, suburban and urban neighborhoods are looking for opportunities to control their energy costs, too. Farm Bureau members support the development of a *Diversified Energy Portfolio* employing a variety of generation resources (advanced coal and nuclear, wind, solar biomass fuel cell and other emerging renewables) coupled with technologies at the distribution level (smart meters, HVAC, lighting equipment, smart appliances and software systems) to help consumers control their energy costs.

Becoming a vital part of the Smart Grid, creating jobs and returning land to valuable use - The Turning Point Solar project has great potential to become a vital part of a *Diversified Energy Portfolio*. OFBF supports this endeavor, and will work with TPS and other interested parties to develop this project. We invite the PUCO lend its support for the initiative.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please docket this letter in PUCO Case Nos.10-501-EL-FOR and 10-502-EL-FOR.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of D. R. Arnold in black ink, followed by a horizontal line.

Director, Energy, Utility and Local Government Policy
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation

CC: Steve Hirsch, President, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
John C. Fisher, Executive Vice President, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Adam Sharp, Vice President, Public Policy, OFBF
Larry Antosch, Senior Director, Environmental Policy, OFBF